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Venice: An Aging City

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Venice: An Aging City

An Interdisciplinary Qualifying Project
Submitted to the faculty of
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Science

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Authorship

As a group we all contributed equally in the data collection, writing and presenting that this project required.

Acknowledgements

We would first like to thank all the Venetians that we interviewed for making this project possible. Thank you Bruno Nogara for helping us with our interviews, as well as your wonderful stories and many laughs. Thank you Umberto Angelin for aiding us in finding interviewees and providing essential insight. Thank you Professor Fabio Carrera for providing us with this opportunity and utilizing your connections to help us find interviewees. Thank you Professor Paul Davis for providing us with so much support and guidance, and for the exhaustive reviewing of our drafts. Thank you Alberto Gallo and Andrea Novello for helping us in whatever ways you could to make this term in Venice as smooth as possible. Lastly, but certainly not least, we would like to thank the Living and Young IQP groups for your collaboration throughout this project.

Abstract

This project initiated a study of the quality of life of older Venetians. Through observations as well as interviews with older Venetians and with representatives of service agencies, we learned that Venice is a city beloved by its elderly residents. Its distinctive setting provides numerous social opportunities, strong community ties, a relaxed lifestyle, and very rich culture and history. But for all its attributes, Venice is not perfect; challenges include the high cost of living, mobility for some, and the overabundance of tourists.

Executive Summary

This project is the product of an investigation into the lives of the elderly in Venice. Worldwide, the average age is steadily increasing, raising the need for research and investigation on the lifestyles and maintenance of lifestyles of the elderly. As Venice's population has a faster rising average age¹ than that of both the whole of Italy² (as seen in Figure 1) and the European Union³, it provides an ideal setting for this type of investigation.

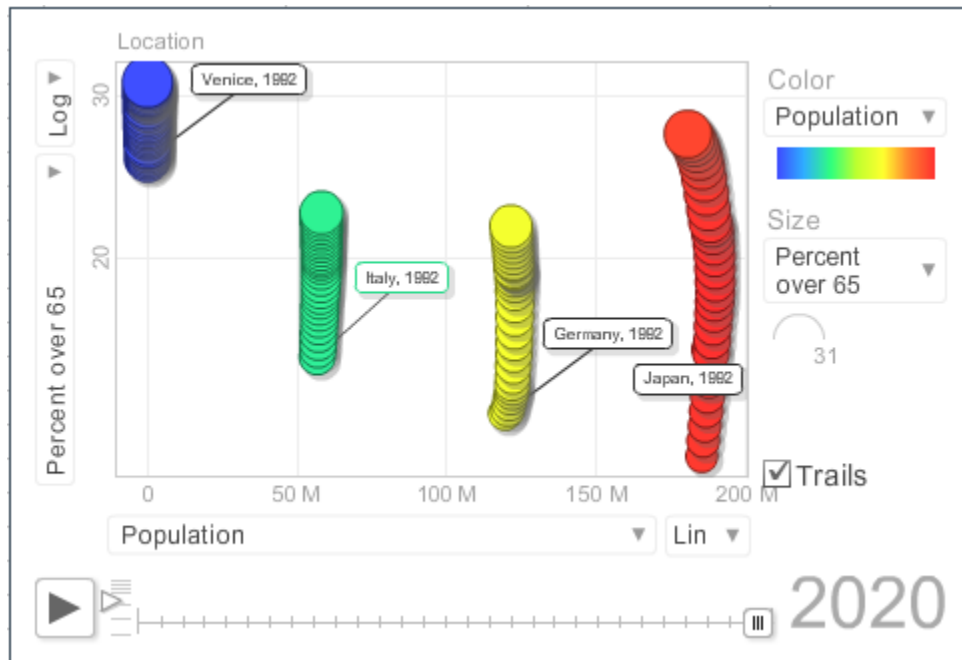


Figure 1: Animated Average Age Progression Chart

We investigated the favorable and unfavorable aspects of Venice in the eyes of the elderly, as well as existing government and private programs that provide aid. We have concluded that Venice is a nice place for the elderly to live but it is not without its fair share of problems.

To learn about the lifestyles of the Venetian elderly, we conducted informal observations, informal interviews, and formal interviews. Informal interviews were conducted with elderly in

¹ Città di Venezia - Servizio Statistica e Ricerca,
<http://www.comune.venezia.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/5945> (accessed 10/8/2008).

² Eurostat,
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=2173,45972494&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&mo=containsall&ms=age+venice&saa=&p_action=SUBMIT&l=us&co=equal&ci=&po=matchany&pi=1130669,0&an=product_type&ao=containsall&av=ITY_&as=0&ad=text&na=1&ob=41,0 (accessed 10/12/2008).

³ Haas, Mark, L. Pax Americana Geriatrica. *Miller-McCune*, 2008. 31.

public areas, while formal interviews were conducted with specific project collaborators in a formal setting. A series of open and closed ended questions were used to gather what aspects of life mattered most to the interviewees, as well as to gather information on topics of specific interest to us. The responses were then tallied based on subject matter and frequency. Formal interviews were conducted with representatives from different programs and services to learn what is offered to the elderly and how many elderly benefit from these programs or services.

The responses from our interviews with the elderly were placed into a tool, called a word cloud, which displays the frequency of words in a set of text based on size. In Figure 2, shown below, the word *badante* appears much larger than others because we specifically inquired about the *badanti* during all of our interviews. Although some other words are present for this reason, the vast majority was from unprompted responses, giving a sense of what is important to the interviewees.

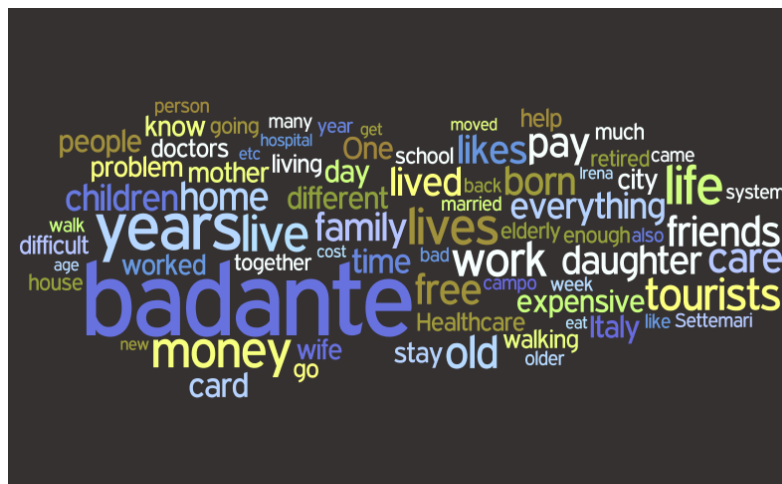


Figure 2: General Interview Transcript word cloud

Review of our word clouds, along with interview transcripts and background research on quality of life, yielded the following factors as the most important to the Venetian elderly:

- Community
- Rhythm of Life
- Culture
- Healthcare
- Safety
- Mobility

- Environment
- Cost of Living
- Housing Availability and Cost
- Politics
- Educational Opportunities

When interviewees were asked what they liked about Venice, the most common response was *tutto*, the Italian word for everything. Upon further probing, a number of aspects of Venice were considered favorable by our interviewees appeared. The categories and relative frequency of appearance of these aspects are shown in Figures 3 and 4.



Figure 3: Favorable Aspects word cloud

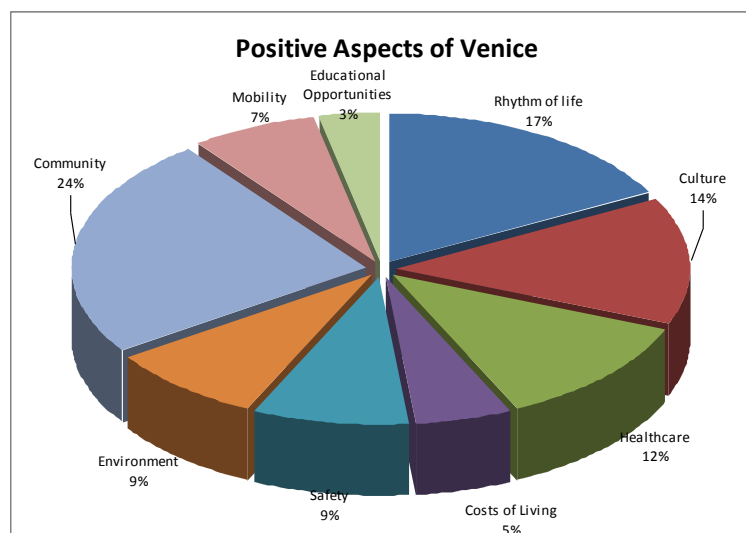


Figure 4: Favorable Aspects Frequency Distribution

The most prominent favorable aspect of Venice is the community life, making up 24% of all positive responses given. They attributed this to Venice's distinct layout and the necessity of walking. In Figure 5 shown below, a group of elderly were speaking with each other for several minutes and in the process of leaving as the picture was taken.



Figure 5: Group of Elderly in Campo Bandiera e Moro o de la Bragora

With this strong sense of community are strong roots and ties to Venice and Venetian culture. 70% of our interviewees were born in Venice, had never left, and would not consider living anywhere else. The elderly love the rich culture of Venice; it accounted for 14% of the favorable responses. The most adored aspects of culture were the people of Venice and the public artwork. Among the strong community and strong ties to Venice are strong family roots. Venetian elders remain active in the lives of their families' younger generations, by babysitting or taking the children to and from school.

For all the favorable aspects for the elderly in Venice, it is not perfect. Some of the aspects that the elderly attribute to favorable conditions are also attributed to the unfavorable. Shown below in Figures 6 and 7 are the aspects of Venice that that were mentioned in an unfavorable light.



Figure 6: Unfavorable Aspects word cloud

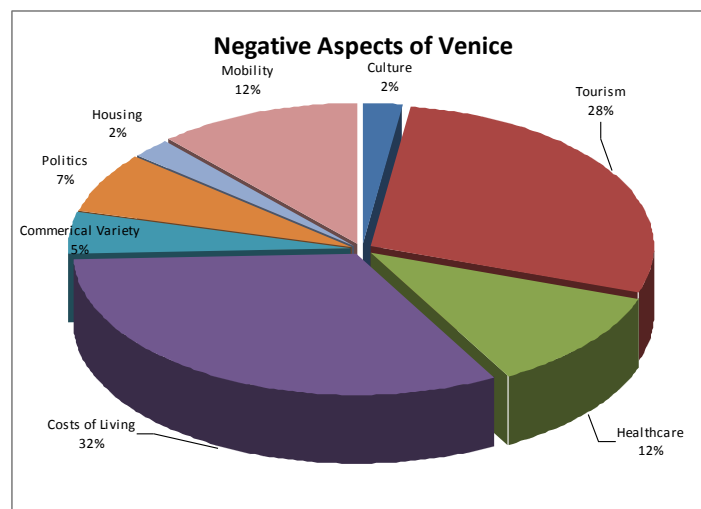


Figure 7: Unfavorable Aspects Frequency Distribution

Cost of living coupled with problems with housing and tourism were the most frequently mentioned negative topics, comprising 62% of all negative responses. The prevailing opinion of our interviewees was that the high cost of living and housing is due to an overabundance of tourism. Another common opinion was that apartment buildings are being converted into bed and breakfast establishments and hotels because it is more profitable to the owner. Those interviewees who had families who had moved away from *Centro Storico* stated that they were driven out by the high cost and lack of available housing.

Elderly everywhere experience problems with mobility, but there are distinct challenges in Venice because walking is the primary method of transportation. All of the interviewees who did not have mobility problems enjoyed the high volume of walking throughout the day. For

those with physical disabilities such as arthritis, or for those who require the use of a wheelchair or cane as seen in Figure 8, the stairs on bridges can limit them to the flat areas around their homes. Those interviewees who acknowledged what Venice has done for the physically handicapped, such as installation of bridge elevators as seen in Figure 9, feel that it is not enough to be truly effective.



Figure 8: Elderly Man Having Difficulty Walking Across a *Campo*



Figure 9: A Bridge Elevator

Programs and services offered to the elderly enhance the quality of life for the Venetians. Programs such as the Diamond Card, an advertisement for which is shown in Figure 10, offer discounts on everyday goods as well as services such as housing maintenance to its holders. The elderly over 75 can also obtain an *imob* card, shown below in Figure 11, granting free *vaporetti* and bus transportation.



Figure 10: Diamond Card Advertisement



Figure 11: Example *imob* card

Other programs meant for the enjoyment of the elderly, like the *Università della Terza Età* (University of the Third Age) and Auser, offer classes for the elderly in many subjects such as English, computer skills, theatre, and history.

Three aspects of healthcare in Venice were examined: hospitals, the *badanti*, and nursing homes. The hospitals in Venice were described as being excellent in quality, but typically have extended waiting periods between diagnosis and procedure. For those who need live-in assistance, there is the option of hiring a *badante*, a recent Italian phenomenon (an advertisement for which is shown in Figure 12). *Badanti* are primarily Eastern European women who live with and care for dependant elders. Providing this assistance and care allows the elderly to stay as active and live as normally as possible. The popularity of *badanti* has led to their regulation within Italy. The *badanti* are evolving into a more professional force as is evident by the

appearance of training programs.⁴ The cost of having a *badante* is between 800 and 1000 Euro/month⁵.



Figure 12: *Badante* Advertisement

When *badanti* are not an option for the elderly, rest homes such as the *Casa di Riposo San Lorenzo* provide comfortable care, rehabilitation, and interesting activities for the elderly living there. The cost of living in *Casa do Riposo San Lorenzo* is about 1600 Euro/month. For those who require the care of either a nursing home or a *badante*, the government will often pay for a significant portion or all the cost if the elderly person is not able to afford it.

The city of Venice has both favorable and unfavorable aspects for the elderly, but the prevailing opinion is despite any shortcomings, the City is loved by its elderly.

⁴ Istituto Cortivo. Corso Operatore Socio Assistenziale per Anziani. http://www.istituto-cortivo.com/operatore-socio-assistenziale-per-anziani.html?circuito=google&gruppo=corso_osa_anziani_search&clid=CL_F0JnI-ZYCFQxMtAodo0a0Xw (Accessed 11/16/2008)

⁵ Unknown. (2002, settembre 07). *Badanti da regolarizzare?* *La Nuova Venezia*.

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1. Introduction

As life expectancy increases and birth rates decrease, the average age of the world's developed nations is steadily rising. This shift will continue because the future elderly are already living. Therefore, accommodations must be made to maintain the older population's quality of life. For example, China currently has over 100,000,000 elderly citizens, using the common definition of elderly as anyone over the age of 65. This number is expected to double within twenty years, and triple within thirty.⁶ Within the next fifty years, over 20% of the citizens of the world's developed nations, including the U.S., China, Japan, Britain, France, Germany, and Russia, will be over 65. The percentage of Italy's population above 60 has been steadily increasing, rising from 18.6% in 2002 to 26% in 2006, giving Italy the second highest percentage of people over 60 in the world.

In 2007, the average age of Italy's population was 43, 47 in the Veneto Region,⁷ and higher still in the historical sector of Venice, *Centro Storico*, at 49.⁸ Nine of the ten cities with the highest percentage of residents over 65 are in Italy, with Venice ranking fourth on this list.⁹ Since the average age of Venice is rising so rapidly, it is an ideal place to conduct an investigation of the elderly lifestyle. The areas of challenges faced by elderly Venetians have aspects that apply both to the elderly worldwide and uniquely to Venice.

In Venice, there are programs and services designed to accommodate and enhance the lives of the elderly. For example, the Diamond Card is a senior discount program which provides discounts from everyday needs to higher cost services such as housing maintenance. For those who have mobility challenges, there is a municipal service that caters specifically to creating items such as maps informing the public what islands are completely, partially, or not accessible. Venice is a unique city in which to live and grow old. This uniqueness prompts the question, "What challenges are faced by the elderly living there?" In the past twenty years of research

⁶ Haas, Mark, L. Pax Americana Geriatrica. *Miller-McCune*, 2008. 31.

⁷ Eurostat, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=2173,45972494&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&mo=containsall&ms=age+venice&saa=&p_action=SUBMIT&l=us&co=equal&ci=,&po=matchany&pi=1130669,0&an=product_type&ao=containsall&av=ITY_&as=0&ad=text&na=1&ob=41,0 (accessed 10/12/2008).

⁸ Città di Venezia - Servizio Statistica e Ricerca, <http://www.comune.venezia.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/5945> (accessed 10/8/2008).

⁹ Auser. <http://www.informanziani.it/modulo.php?id=2228>

done by Worcester Polytechnic Institute students in Venice, the main focus has been the city of Venice itself. This project, along with two others^{39,38}, focuses on the life of Venetians; ours specifically on the lives of the elderly. Two studies^{10,11} have included factors that would be relevant to the lives of the elderly. More information exists on the *Città di Venezia* webpage¹², but the majority of this information is only available in Italian. Furthermore, there is no compilation of the opinions of the group in question.

To understand how elderly Venetians live, this project investigates the advantages and disadvantages of being elderly in Venice. Opinions from elderly Venetians have been gathered and compiled to determine these factors. In addition, exploration of municipal and private programs and services provides an overview of the support system in place for elderly Venetians, such as free *Vaporetto* transportation and mechanized lifts over bridges. This overview also illustrates what are perceived to be the challenges faced by elderly Venetians.

¹⁰ Kevin Black, Sara Migdal, Michael Morin, Dukens Rene, Nick Vitello, *Urban Maintenance and Venetian Accessibility*. (Worcester, MA: Worcester Polytechnic Institute, 2007).

¹¹ *The Decline of Venetian Food Stores as a Gauge for Social Change in the City*, (Worcester, MA: Worcester Polytechnic Institute, 2006).

¹² <http://www.comune.venezia.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/220>

2 Background

As a result of increased life expectancies and decreased birth rates, the average age of the world population is steadily increasing. This results in the need to reform policies and programs to improve the life of the elderly. In China, there are currently over 100,000,000 citizens over 65, a value that is expected to double in twenty years, and triple within thirty years¹³. The current average age of the population of the European Union (EU) is just over 40, and is expected to increase to 48 by 2060¹⁴. Across the 27 countries of the EU, there are now four people of working age for every person over 65, but by 2060 that ratio will be 2:1.¹⁵ Within the next fifty years, over 20% of the citizens of the U.S., China, Japan, Britain, France, Germany, and Russia, will be over 65.¹⁶ Since there are more citizens over 65 than ever, government issued funds will need to be increased on issues such as social security, retirement pensions, and healthcare costs to ensure better and longer lives for the elderly. In Italy, the average age as of 2008 is 43 and is expected to reach 51 by 2060. Furthermore, according to a study conducted by Auser, nine of the ten cities with the highest percentage of residents over 65 are in Italy.¹⁷ This drastic increase in the number of elderly residents indicates that it is important that Italy investigates how to uphold and enhance the quality of life of the elderly. Figure 13 represents the past, present, and predicted progression of average age over time between the years 1992 and 2020. With blue representing Venice, green representing Italy, yellow representing Germany, and red representing Japan, we can see that while the percentage over 65 is increasing for each location, Venice does so at a higher rate.

¹³ Haas, Mark, L. Pax Americana Geriatrica. *Miller-McCune*, 2008. 31.

¹⁴ Giannakouris, K. *Ageing Characterises the Demographic Perspectives of the European Societies*, Eurostat, 2008.

¹⁵ Traynor, I. (2008, Agosto 27). Europe of the Future: Germany Shrinks, France Grows, but UK Population Booms. *The Guardian*.

¹⁶ Haas, Mark, L. Pax Americana Geriatrica. *Miller-McCune*, 2008. 31.

¹⁷ Auser. <http://www.informanziani.it/modulo.php?id=2228>

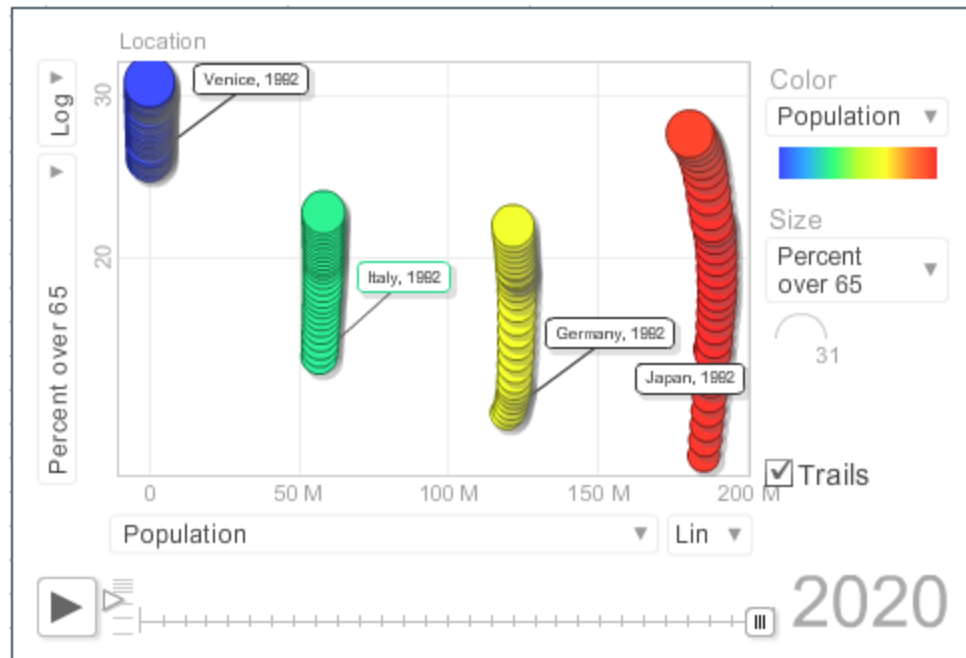


Figure 13: Age Progression Motion Chart

An estimated 24% of the population of Venice is over 65 years of age, which equates to nearly 65,000 residents of Venice's 271,000 residents being elderly. The average age in the commune of Venice is currently 47 and 49 in the *Centro Storico*.¹⁸ The percentage of elderly residents in the "Centro Storico" has increased from 28% in 2006 to 29% in 2008 and is expected to increase to 30% by 2015;¹⁹ compared to mainland Venice's current 24% and expected 25% by 2015.²⁰ This increase, though it may seem insignificant, is important because as Venice's population decreases, the percentage of elderly continues to increase – which may result in a lack of people to care for the elderly.

¹⁸ "Età Media Della Popolazione Residente Del Comune Di Venezia." Città di Venezia.

<http://www.comune.venezia.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/4069> (accessed 09/08, 2008).

¹⁹ "T01: Residenti Previsti Al 31.12 Di Ogni Anno - Centro Storico." Città di Venezia: Modello di Previsione Demografica. <http://www.comune.venezia.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/4703> (accessed 10/04, 2008).

²⁰ "T03: Residenti Previsti Al 31.12 Di Ogni Anno - Terraferma " Città di Venezia: Modello di Previsione Demografica. <http://www.comune.venezia.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/4703> (accessed 10/04, 2008).

Table 1: Number and percent of Citizens over 65 in the "Centro Storico"

Year	# over 65	Total Population	% over 65
2006	17,598	61,613	28.56215
2008	17,528	60,214	29.10951
2015	16,633	55,020	30.23083

Table 2: Number and percent of Citizens over 65 in Mainland Venice

Year	# over 65	Total Population	% over 65
2006	43,109	176,708	24.39561
2008	43,951	176,981	24.83374
2015	44,707	175,789	25.43219

2.1 Quality of Life of the elderly

The term quality of life can encompass many aspects of a person's life and there is no exact definition available. Quality of life is based on both external circumstances as well as an individual's perception of these circumstances. This makes assessment of quality of life difficult since it is based on individual perceptions rather than a general evaluation. When assessing the quality of life of elderly in the past, the main factor considered has been health, though this is not the most accurate way to characterize quality of life, regardless of age group²¹. A popular evaluation of quality of life used recently is the Life Satisfaction Index (LSI), which is a brief questionnaire which measures quality of life based on five main categories:

- Zest vs. apathy – enthusiasm of response to life, resolution and fortitude
- Respondents active acceptance of personal responsibility for their life
- Congruence between desired and achieved goals – difference between desired and achieved goals
- Self concept – emotional, physical, and intellectual dimensions, and mood tone
- Positive effective responses.

²¹ Browne, J. P., C. A. O'Boyle, H. M. McGee, C. R. B. Joyce, N. J. McDonald, K. O'Malley, and B. Hiltbrunner. "Individual Quality of Life in the Healthy Elderly." *Quality of Life Research* 3, no. 4 (Aug., 1994): 235-244, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4034542> (accessed 10/04/2008).

The LSI measures the qualitative aspect of quality of life rather than environmental factors like cost of living, housing, and healthcare quality.

2.1.1 Venetian Quality of Life

Since Venice has a distinct city layout, there are different factors than other municipalities that affect the elderly quality of life.

2.1.1.1 Health

Many consider Venice to be an ideal place to live after retirement due to the unique layout of the city and the distinct environment that some consider well-suited toward an older community. Venice can also be considered a good environment for the elderly because of the close interaction with many other age groups²². The quality of life of the elderly residents could also be negatively affected by factors that would not be present in other cities. The diverse methods of transportation employed in Venice can create mobility challenges caused by the many bridges and stairs, which have to be crossed to reach common places such as supermarkets, pharmacies, and hospitals.

Italy provides a national healthcare system to its citizens called the *Servizio Sanitario Nazionale* (SSN) which provides low or no cost healthcare to all citizens of the EU. This includes in-patient treatments as well as visits to family doctors and other specialists. This plan covers part, or all of the costs of medications, and sometimes out-patient treatment or dental treatment. With this health coverage, hospitalization will be of no charge in state hospitals (*ospedali*). Many choose to take out private insurance entitling the holder to treatment in private hospitals (*cliniche*), which can reduce the wait time for specialist appointments and surgeries. Treatment in private hospitals, however, can be very expensive, and therefore is not practical for all. Through a referral from a physician, home health-care aids are available, but there may be a fee based on the location of the home where aid is needed.²³

In recent years, there has been a considerable increase in the number of Venetian patients over 65 admitted to hospitals due to a broken femur, as can be seen in Figure 1. This increase in hip fractures has been addressed by the *Ospedale Civile*, Venice's main hospital, as it has

²² Beatley, T. *Native to Nowhere* Island Press, 2005.

²³ Health System in Italy. <http://www.italytravelescape.com/Health%20system.htm> (accessed 10/08, 2008).

implemented a new program dedicated to the recovery and rehabilitation of the elderly after suffering from a hip fracture. The program decreases the recovery time and restores the patient's health to allow them to return to their normal lifestyle.²⁴

A possible contributor to health concern may be the environment, including speculation of various cancers caused by pollution in the city of Venice²⁵. Though there may be some additional health concerns, the city's layout may also contribute to some health benefits. In a recent study, it was found that Venetians are at a lower risk of developing cardiovascular diseases, have lower blood pressure and bad cholesterol (HDL), and have a lower body weight as compared with residents of both Mestre and the Lido. This implies that the absence of cars on the island contributes to an overall healthier lifestyle for the elderly Venetians, and is essential that elderly remain active in order to maintain their lifestyle.²⁶

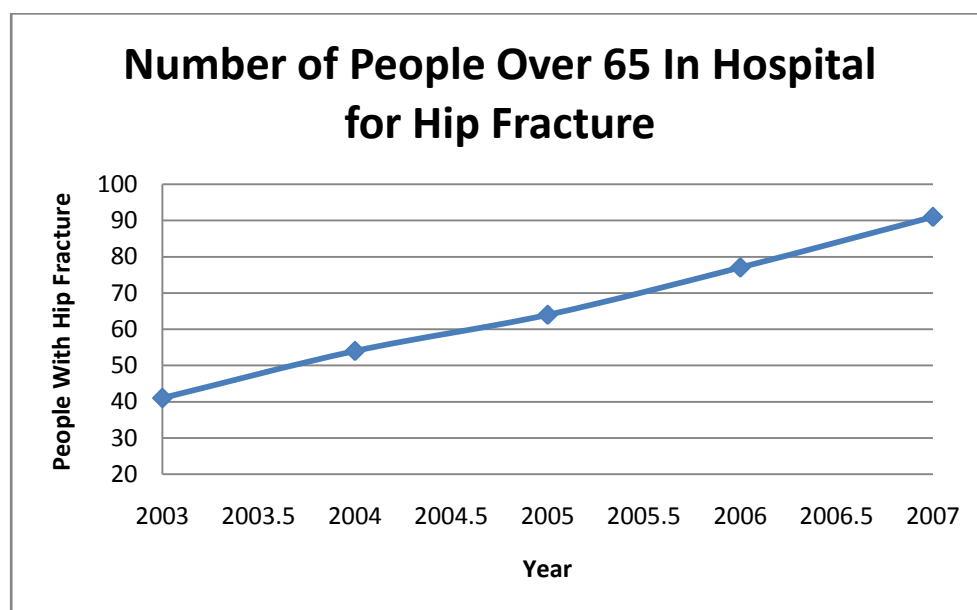


Figure 14: Number of People Over 65 Admitted to the Hospital Annually for Hip Fractures

²⁴ Unknown. (2008, Novembre 21). Sempre Più Anziani Si Rompono il Femore e L'ospedale Organizza un Servizio Dedicato. *Il Gazzettino*.

²⁵ Blengio, G., E. Castellani, D. Dalla Costa, S. Falcone, S. Milani, P. Sartori, MA Suhad, and F. Valentini. "Geographical Analysis of Mortality in a Municipality of the Veneto Region, Where a Landfill is Located, and the Surrounding Area. Years 1995-2003." *Epidemiologia e Prevenzione* 32, no. 1 (Jan-1, 2008): 27-34.

²⁶ Dianese, M. (2008, Novembre 07). Cuore Più Sano Per Chi Vive in Centro Storico. *Il Gazzettino*

Since 2002, when the government began regulating *badante* – live-in aids for the elderly who generally come from eastern European countries – there has been an increase in the number of immigrants to Venice (See Figure 2). In particular, between 2002 and 2003, there was a sharp rise in the number of females between the ages of 25 and 60 who have immigrated to *Centro Storico*²⁷.

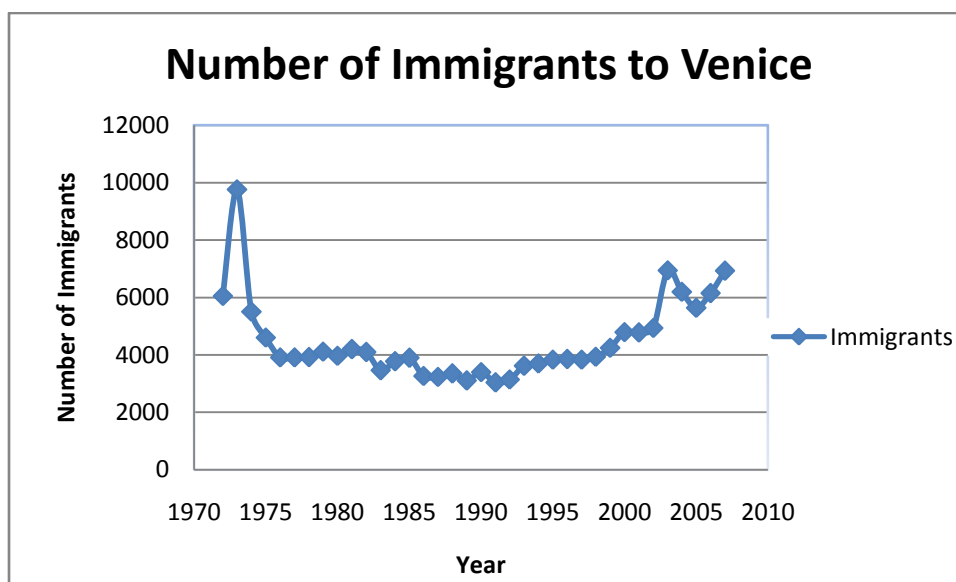


Figure 15: Number of Immigrants to Venice Between 1971 and 2007

The *badante* are generally live-in aids, therefore all living expenses are covered (lodging, food, etc.), and they receive a stipend of between 800 and 1000 Euros per month.²⁸ These *badante* are able to work and live in Venice with a *permesso di soggiorno* when there may not be work available for them in their own country. However, the process of obtaining this *permesso* can take a considerable amount of time, resulting in a number of people who come here to work as a *badante* without this permit.²⁹ The *badante* are necessary to care for the elderly without family, as well as those with family unable to care for aging relatives due to lack of resources or

²⁷ <http://www.comune.venezia.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/5824>

²⁸ Unknown. (2002, settembre 07). *Badanti da regolarizzare? La Nuova Venezia*.

²⁹ Unknown. (2006, Settembre 21). <<Badanti>>: Il Sistema Regge Solo Se Resta Com'è. *Il Manifesto*.

other commitments. This has been an inevitable result of the decline in the number of family members who live together in a single household³⁰, as can be seen in Figure 3.

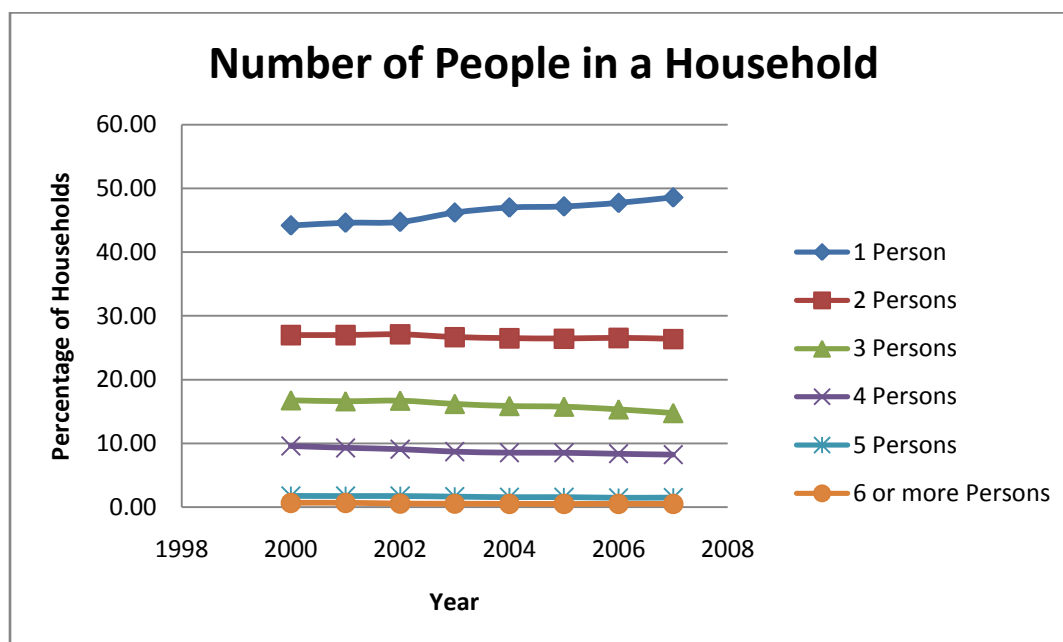


Figure 16: Percentage of Households According to Number of Occupants

As is also evident by Figure 3, the percentage of households inhabited by only one person has been steadily rising, including a number of older people living alone, as seen in Figure 4 which displays the number of residents over 64 living alone in *S. Marco*, *Castello*, *S. Elena*, and *Cannareggio*.

³⁰ Comune di Venezia. <http://www.comune.venezia.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/3749> (Accessed 11/16/2008)

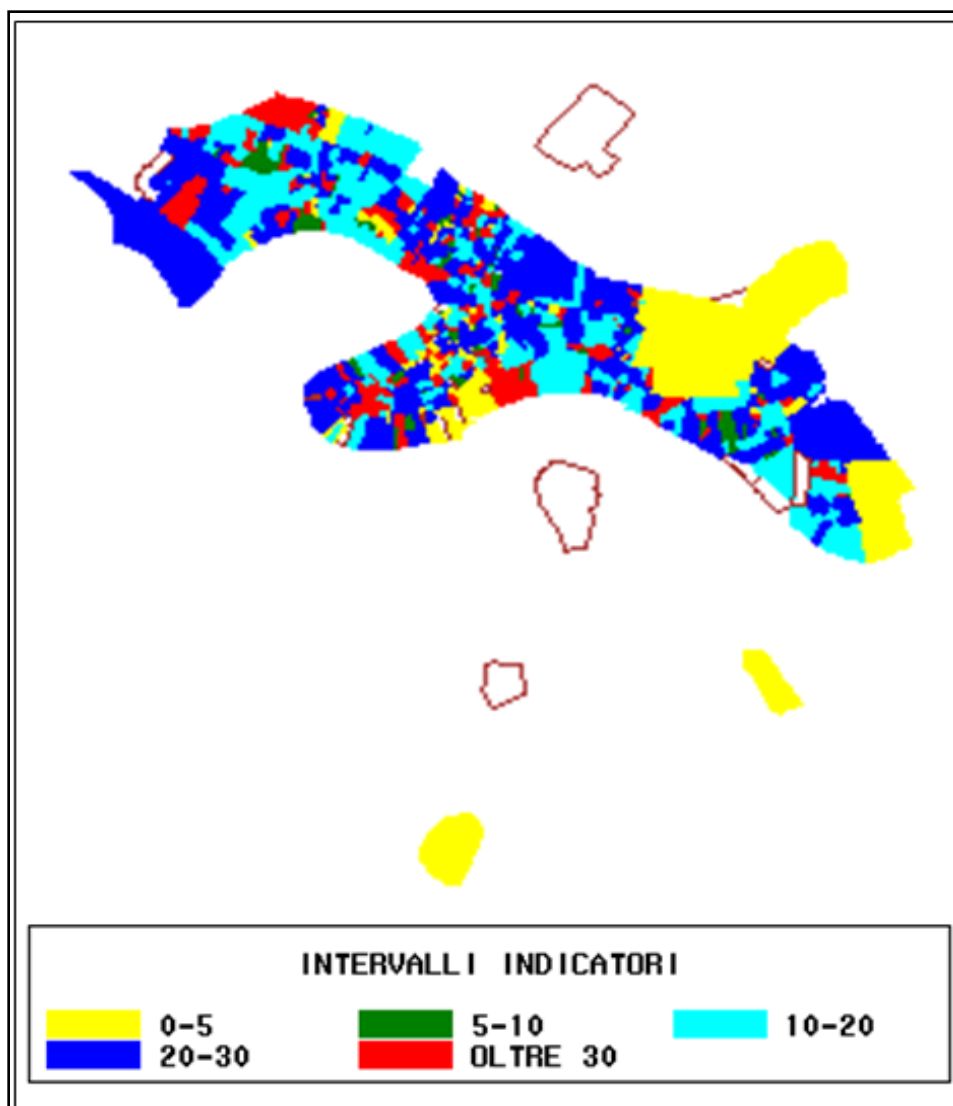


Figure 17: Single-person households with occupant over 64³¹

The growing number of elderly living on their own will need assistance in order to maintain their lifestyle, which leads to the necessity of a *badante*. Though there are no

³¹Comune di Venezia. Indicatori Anagrafici. http://194.243.104.170/cgi-bin/broker.exe?_service=venis&_program=pgmfile.indicatori3_02.sas&_debug=0&pgm=1&quarti=1&ind=101 (Accessed 11/16/2008)

regulations on the training required to become a *badante*, there are courses available to people who wish to become a *badante*.³²

As it is important for the elderly to remain physically active, it is equally important that they remain socially active and have consistent interaction with other members of their community. One way for the elderly Venetians to do this is to take part in various activities that entail socialization. One such activity is known as *cassa peota*, in which each member contributes a weekly fee between 5 and 50 Euros from the beginning of January until the end of November. The money collected is used to assemble large dinners or other big events to be attended by the contributors.³³

2.1.1.2 Pensions

Social security is an important factor for the elderly to maintain a high quality of life. The amount of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) dedicated to social security in Italy is the highest of the countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with an estimated 13.9% of the country's GDP going to social security – compared to the average 7.7% for all other OECD countries in 2003 (Figure 18)³⁴. However, the average income of the Veneto region decreased by 9% between the years 2000 and 2004, which may have impacted the residents' ability to save money for retirement, leading to a need for compensation by increasing social security funds³⁵.

³² Istituto Cortivo. Corso Operatore Socio Assistenziale per Anziani. http://www.istituto-cortivo.com/operatore-socio-assistenziale-per-anziani.html?circuito=google&gruppo=corso_osa_anziani_search&gclid=CL_F0JnI-ZYCFQxMtAodo0a0Xw (Accessed 11/16/2008)

³⁴ *Pensions at a Glance - Public Policies Across OECD Countries 2007 Edition: Highlights – Italy*, OECD, 2007 (accessed 10/04/2008).

³⁵ Krüger, A. *Statistics in Focus: General and Regional Statistics - Economy and Finance*, EuroStat, 2008.

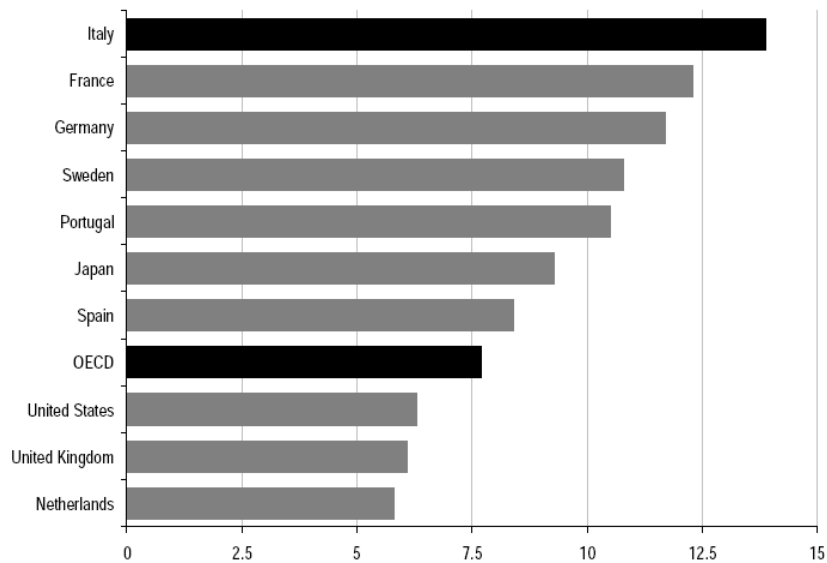


Figure 18: Public Spending on Pensions in 10 OECD countries, 2003

2.1.1.3 Cost of Living

A factor that affects the quality of life of many people is the cost of living. The cost of living includes the cost of housing and the cost of basic necessities. As can be seen in Figure 6, Venice has been above the average of 13 other larger Italian cities since 1999.

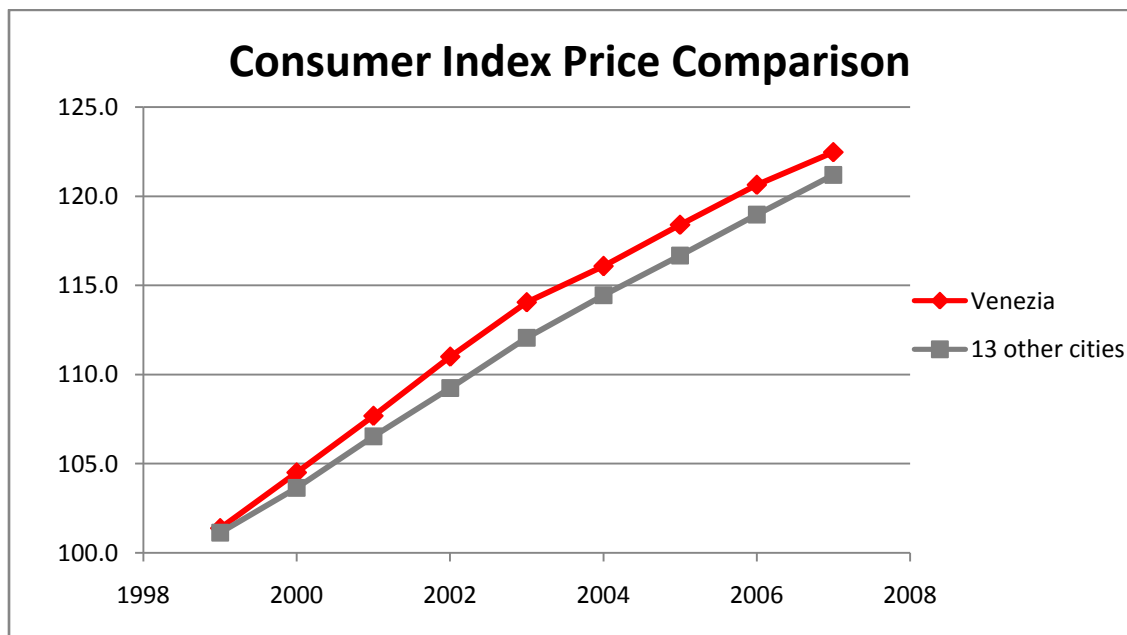


Figure 19: Consumer Price Comparison for Venice and 13 other Italian Cities

2.1.1.4 Safety

Compared to other large Italian cities, Venice is considerably safe, ranking second when compared to eleven other large Italian cities as can be seen in Figure 7.

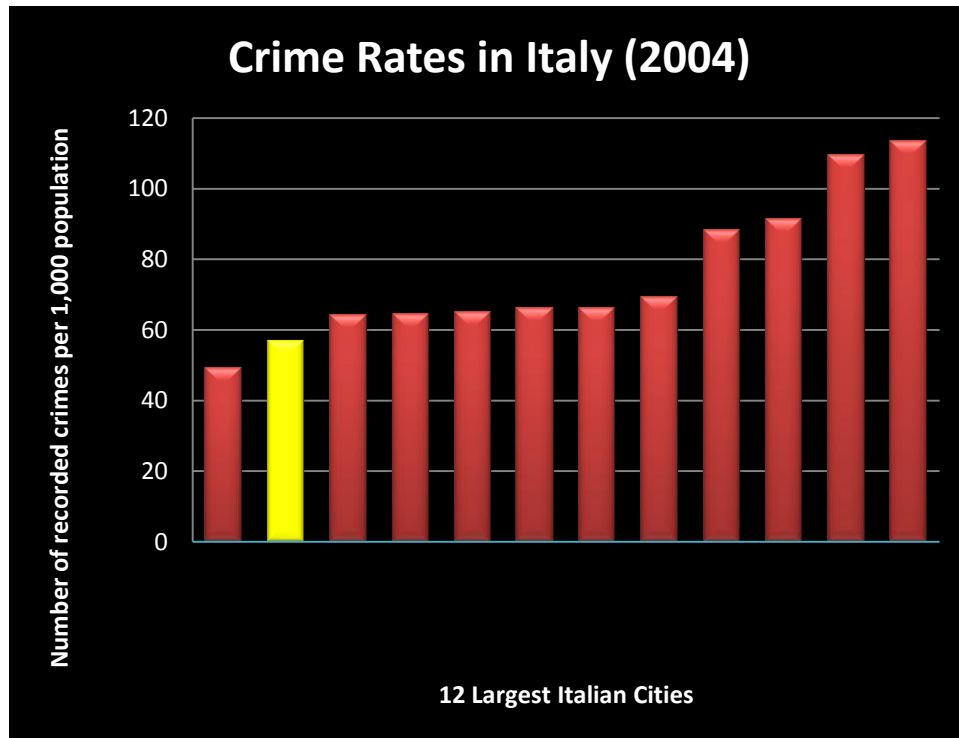


Figure 20: Crime rates in 12 large Italian cities

2.1.2 Venetian Programs and Services

Venice provides various programs and services to the elderly, including advantages such as “La Carta Diamante” (the Diamond Card) which is available to eligible residents over 65. With this card, various discounts are available, including discounts on food, clothing, and other necessities, as well as discounts on various services (plumbing, painting, etc.). Transportation discounts are also available to the elderly, including free imob cards for citizens over the age of 70, which entitles the cardholder to free transportation on the vaporetti. There is a booklet

available online³⁶, which offers valuable information concerning what services are available to elderly faced with mobility challenges.

³⁶ carte dei servizi page <http://www.comune.venezia.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/15318>

3 Methodology

This project is intended to provide insight into the lives of Venetian elders. We organized and conducted our research with the purpose of creating a base of information on this topic. This methodology was designed with the intention of investigating the quality of life topics contained within the Life Satisfaction Index. To accomplish this, we focused on several objectives:

1. To determine the advantages of being elderly in Venice
2. To determine the most common challenges of being elderly in Venice
3. To document programs and services offered to the elderly in Venice

These three objectives were completed with similar methods. The first step was to conduct observations. This was to determine which locations were of interest to us for conducting interviews, our next step. Following the interviews, the data was compiled and organized to guide further research on the topics that arose in the interviews. The first two objectives also have several intermediate steps to analyze the data.

Our research area was limited in several aspects. Geographically, we remained within the boundaries of *Centro Storico*, shown below in Figure 8.



Figure 21: Map of Study Area

However, some of the research conducted, such as that on healthcare, applies to larger geographic areas of the Veneto Region and all of Italy.

The lower boundary of our age range was set at 65 years of age, but this was flexible since different programs and services apply to different ages such as 60, 65, and 75. We also did

not want to discount any Venetians reaching retirement age, since that is the principal bracket we examined.

3.1 Determining the Advantages and Challenges

Determining the aspects of Venice that are both positive and negative in eyes of the elderly was an essential component of understanding their lives. Our research on these two objectives was completed simultaneously. The methods applied to this objective were, in chronological order: informal observations, informal interviews, formal interviews, data coding, and additional guided background research.

3.1.1 Informal Observations

We began informal observations as the first step in data collection. These were conducted whenever we were moving about the city and were principally seeking target places to conduct informal interviews. To conduct these observations, we looked for places that had very high elderly traffic and congregation. When one was found, its location and the time at which we were present were noted. We returned to the places that met our interest requirements at similar times and conducted informal interviews. These observations were also used to seek out advertisements and locations for programs and services for the elderly.

3.1.2 Informal Interviews

The majority of our data gathering consisted of informal interviews. Based on our informal observations, we targeted bars and *campi* to conduct the interviews. They primarily took place in the late morning and late afternoon because that was when the highest numbers of elderly seemed to be out. Potential interviewees were those who had the typical appearance of an elderly person (lax tone and wrinkles on exposed skin). Since we sought only to interview those living in *Centro Storico*, anyone carrying tourist-related items or exhibiting behavior typical of tourists was discounted. These items included: cameras, maps, luggage, and items that are clearly intended to be souvenirs. The typical tourist behaviors that we looked for were speaking a language other than Italian or an Italian dialect, asking for directions, and taking long pauses to look at tourist attractions, i.e. monuments, reliefs, and statues. If a person fulfilled our requirements, we approached them for an interview.

Initiation of the interviews took place through an introduction and request to interview. We approached potential respondents and stated we were American students studying the quality of life of Venetians and asked if they would like to answer some questions. If they were willing, we asked for permission to record notes from the interview for our records. If they agreed, we proceeded with the interview. Since the vast majority of our interviewees only spoke Italian, the verbal communication was completed by our Italian-speaking group member, Angelica DeMartino. She also verbally translated the responses which were recorded by one of our other group members.

The interviews consisted of a series of open and closed ended questions designed to gather opinions on what the interviewees feel are the most important aspects of living in Venice, as well as gather demographic data and opinions related to specific items of interest. Once the first three interviews were completed, the questions were modified based on the topics and additional questions that arose. There were no drastic changes in format, but a few specific questions were added to thoroughly probe for information on topics of interest. Additional items recorded on the interview transcripts were the date, start and end times of the interview, and the location of the interview, all for indexing purposes. All questions asked during these interviews can be found on the form in Appendix C: Interview Forms.

3.1.3 Formal Interviews

Formal interviews were conducted with our key collaborators and several other individuals introduced to us by them. These were by appointment in an indoor and relaxed setting. The questions used for these interviews were the same as those used for the informal interviews. The main differences were scheduling and controlled locations, which allowed more time for discussion and answers to our questions. Additional permission was asked for the interviewee's name and photograph to be used in the report and presentation. The method of recording and types of additional information remained the same as the informal interviews.

3.1.4 Word Clouds

Word clouds were used as a tool during the preliminary analysis of our interview data. A word cloud is a stylized display of text that bases the size of the words on the frequency present in the input text. An example word cloud is shown below in Figure 8. In this figure the word

‘word’ was entered five times whereas the word ‘example’ was entered three times and word ‘cloud’ was entered twice.



Figure 22: Example Word Cloud³⁷

Raw interview transcripts were input with minor modifications to remove common words that were not part of the response data such as ‘stated’. The data was also separated by gender of the respondent and by favorable and unfavorable responses. This allowed us to quickly visualize the words and subsequently determine the topics that arose most frequently during the interviews.

3.1.5 Interview Data Coding

In order to convert the responses from our interviews into categories, a coding system was implemented. The first kind of coding that was used was a frequency-based system. A common starting point was to take the demographic information obtained from each interviewee and enter it into a spread sheet. The responses to questions asked during interviews were then collected and entered in shorthand. If an answer had multiple components to it, each component was given its own cell. Responses were categorized by the quality of life topic under which it fell and whether it was a positive or negative response. For the positive responses, the frequency of appearance of each quality of life topic was tallied and the percentage distribution calculated.

³⁷<http://www.wordle.com>

This process was repeated for the negative responses and repeated again to break up the favorable and unfavorable responses by gender.

The second type of coding system was based on the demographics of our interviewees. This utilized the same information in the spreadsheet as the frequency based coding, but percentages were calculated based on demographic distribution and individual responses. We computed the frequency of responses for the following categories: men, women, active, semi-active, with or without children, and age.

3.1.6 Further Background Research

Once the coding was complete, we sought quantitative data to further illuminate high areas of interest to interviewees.

3.1.7 Determining Quality of Life Factors

We determined a final list of quality of life factors important to elderly Venetians by categorizing response topics according to the Life Satisfaction Index (LSI) topics (see section 2.1).

3.2 Documentation of Programs and Services

Documenting programs and services that cater to the elderly in Venice is a key component to gain insight into their lives. The programs and services that are present are an indicator of what the government and people in and around Venice feel are challenges for the elderly. The chronological approach of observations, interviews, data compilation, and guided background research used in the first two objectives was also utilized here. The difference between the methods of this objective and the previous two is that the observations and interviews were used to gain awareness of different programs and services, while formal interviews with representatives and online research were for background data gathering.

3.2.1 Determining Available Programs and Services

Our initial background research brought several organizations of interest to our attention, but we wished to learn about as many as possible. The initial step was completed through our informal observations as mentioned above. We sought out advertisements as well as establishments with signs that would indicate that their purpose was to cater to the elderly.

During our interviews, we questioned the interviewees' knowledge of such programs and services, as well as their utilization. From these responses, we gained additional information on which to conduct further research.

3.2.2 Contacting Program and Service Representatives

To begin documenting programs and services for the elderly, we attempted to contact city officials to learn about city implemented programs, a nursing home administrator to learn about rest home options for the elderly, and Auser to learn more about the *badanti*. Interview forms for available interviews can be found in Appendix C: Interview Form for Directors of Programs and Services, and Interview Form for Retirement Homes. If contact was not established, we attempted to conduct further research online.

3.2.3 Compilation and Analysis

The data obtained from section 3.2.2 was compiled and analyzed to provide as much unified documentation as possible and examine the utilization by the elderly. The compilation portion was to organize the information in the appropriate places; background for online research and findings and analysis for data obtained directly from representatives. The analysis examined the number of our interviewees who knew of different programs and services, which ones they utilized, and why or why not. This was completed as a superficial examination of the effectiveness of the programs and services in question.

3.3 Storyline Compilations

We felt one way to convey a large amount of the information gathered in this project would be to assemble a storyline about “the day in the life of an elderly Venetian”. However, due to time constraints, we were not able to follow through with this idea. We recommend that future projects investigate and pursue this possibility. Several story lines could be created, based on people of various activity levels throughout the span of a day. The various stories would demonstrate what a specific type of person could do on a typical day. The selection of the event would be based on informal observations and any interview data that pertained to such activities. These events would tie in key findings from the rest of our research, providing for easy transition between related topics. For example, going to the store to buy groceries leads to cost of living findings and analysis.

4 Findings and Analysis

Venice is a pleasant place to live for the elderly, according to the evidence at hand: interviews with both active and semi-active Venetian elders as well as various quantitative data. Our interviewees consisted of 10 men and 13 women – a total of 23 - between the ages of 60 and 89, all residents of Centro Storico or Lido, 11 active and 12 semi-active. “Active” elders are those involved within their community, not confined to their homes, and who participated in different organizations. “Semi-active” elders are those who were not actively involved in any organizations and were confined to specific areas around their home.

We did not interview any “in-active” elders, or those who would be completely confined to their homes. We know that there are some elders who are completely limited by their mobility, therefore they do not leave their homes, and were impossible to interview at this time. From our research, we collected, organized, and coded our data. Our findings generated several categories that helped define the quality of life factors used in analysis.

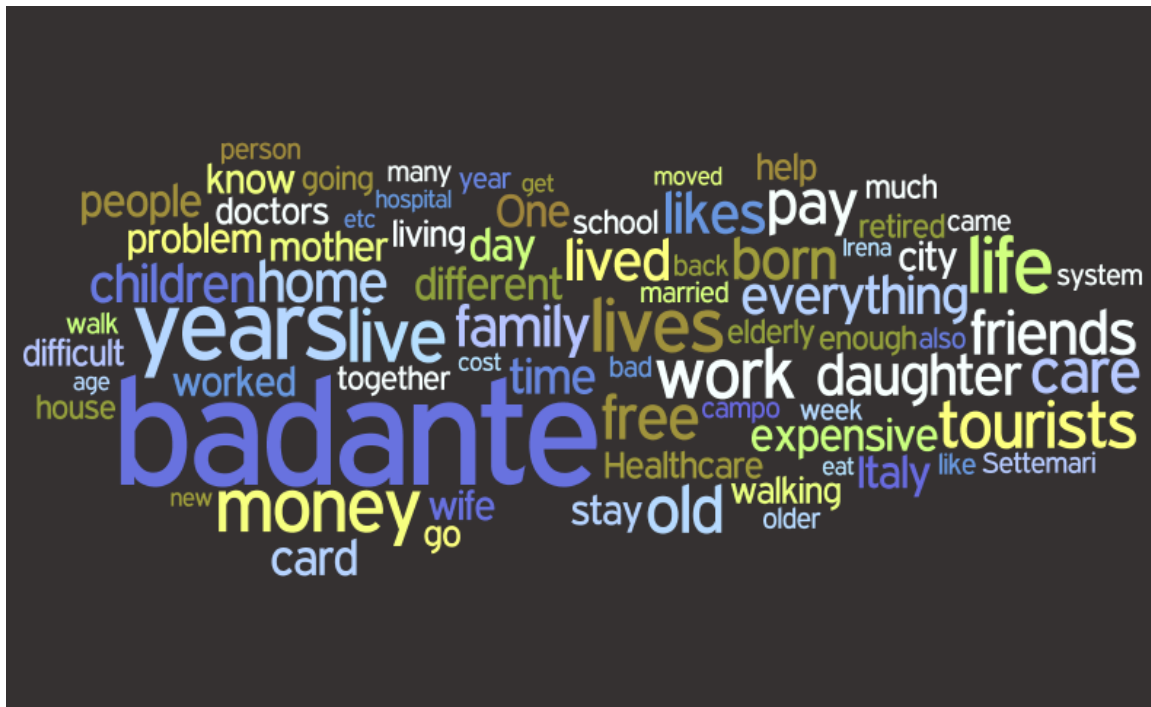


Figure 23: General Interview word cloud

The word cloud above was generated using the transcriptions of all the interviews we collected. The larger words represent words that were mentioned more frequently in interviews. Though some words were specifically mentioned through the prompting of interview questions, (i.e. *badante*), there is still a significant appearance of words that were not specifically prompted. A tally of interview responses of the positive and negative aspects of Venice is represented in the graphs below, showing the importance of different topics that were mentioned.

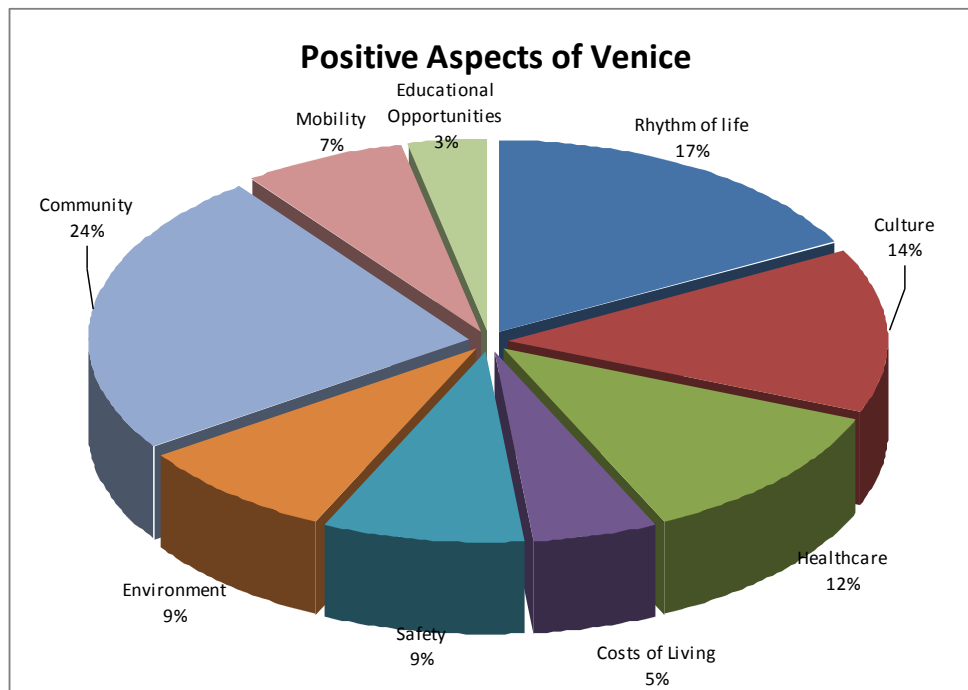


Figure 24: Positive Aspects of Venice pie chart

From the favorable aspects graph, we can see that Venetian community and rhythm of life were mentioned frequently. Healthcare and culture were not far behind, representing 12% and 14% of the responses respectively.

In the negative aspects chart below, we can see that the high costs of living and overabundance of tourists were common dislikes about Venice. Though culture was usually seen as a positive aspect of Venice, it represents 2% of the dislikes due to the Venetian youth being seen as “impolite” by some of our interviewees.

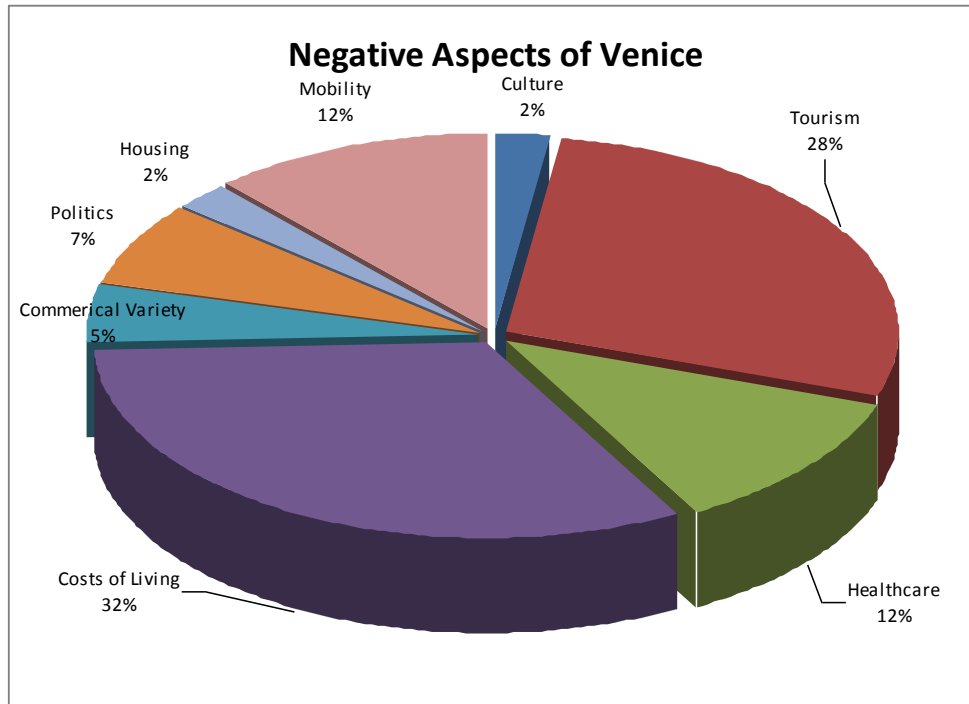


Figure 25: Negative Aspects of Venice pie chart

4.1 Venetian Community

Venice social life is favorable to both active and in-active elders due to its close knit communities and common areas such as favorite *campi* and bars. During our stay in Venice, we were able to observe the Venetian community at all times of the day. A common sight on our daily errands was frequent groups of elders clustered at different bars or seated in *campi* with benches.

Proof of Venice's strong community came to us through formal interviews. In our interviews, we directly asked if the interviewee had a favorite area to meet with friends, but this was not necessarily where the proof came from. When asking the elders what they liked most about Venice, 24% responded with an answer that included the community in which they lived. Umberto Angelin described Venice with this quote: "Life [in Venice] is in the streets". He further commented on the street life by saying that it is typical for Venetians to hang out at a bar with friends and he finds it easy to find people he knows; Paolo* confirmed this fact by saying that an important part of life in Venice is seeing many people when out walking. Signore

* Names have been changed to protect the privacy of our collaborators and interviewees.

Rinaldi*, a longtime frequenter of Pampo's bar in San Elena, described the life in Venice as revolving around the community and social life. As a retired adult, he makes his way to Pampo's twice a day to meet with friends before lunch and dinner. Signore and Signora Bertolli* described the community within their clubs, parish, and family as a "great wealth". Since 32% of our interviewees were members of the Settemari club, a local rowing organization, we were able to ask specific questions pertaining to their interest in the organization. 71% said they liked belonging to the organization from a social aspect – to meet new friends with similar interests, or to find new organizations through the club. Signore Angelin enjoys the Settemari club as a way of preserving Venetian culture – especially since he believes Venice is turning into a museum.

The word cloud below shows the frequency of words mentioned when interviewees were asked what they liked about Venice. Notice that community and rhythm of life are the two most frequent responses, showing how important they are to Venetian elders.



Figure 26: Interview "likes" word cloud

An important part of the day for the semi-active elders we spoke with was a trip to their favorite *campo*. Three of our semi-active female elders were all interviewed in the *Brandiera e Moro Campo*. These three women were aided by two *badante*, and on fair weather days, we frequently saw them sitting in this *campo* between the hours of 9:00am and 12:00pm. They represent the population of semi-active elders who require the assistance of a *badante* or family

member, and the main part of their day is making a trip to the closest *campo* to socialize with a few friends. With the help of the *badante*, these elders who would otherwise be unable to travel outside their homes are able to participate in the community life within close walking distance. Though these semi-active elders may not participate in organizations or travel much outside their homes, the closeness of community life in Venice allows them to continue to see friends and neighbors during their short walks.

A different type of socialization among the elderly women in Venice is a type of micro-lending club. Signora Rinaldi*, the only elder we spoke with who was a member of this type of club, said that it was a way to meet with friends once a week. According to her, the clubs are made up of about fifteen men and women from the same area who meet once a week. At each meeting, the treasurer will collect weekly dues of 10 to 20 Euros and add it to the growing fund. At the end of the year, the money is redistributed, usually around Christmas time for the gift giving season. Throughout the year, money can be borrowed with interest, and the profits from interest are equally distributed at the end of the year. This socialized “bank” provides not only a useful service as a savings club, but also a useful way to meet and keep in touch with friends – especially for elder women.

4.2 Venetian Roots

Strong roots and strong family ties are very important to Venetian elders. These roots help to strengthen the sense of community and potentially increase the general satisfaction of life for the elders. 73% of the elders we interviewed had lived in Venice for their entire lives, and for those who had lived in other places, 43% said they would always come back to Venice. The children of our interviewees all grew up in Venice and 67% continue to live in Venice, and 20% live in either Mestre or Lido. As we can see from past census data in Figure 3, many people used to live in one household, generally an entire family consisting of three generations. Signore Bertolli explained that many families would live together in the same dwelling, allowing the older children to take care of the grandparents. Over the years the census data has shown that the size of households are decreasing, showing that only two generations of families typically live together or people live alone. As seen in the “Venetian Youth” project, many young adults are

leaving Centro Storico due to lack of housing or job opportunities³⁸. With these families moving apart, many of the elders are left to live on their own. With the elderly living on their own, it's hard for the family to help with common tasks such as grocery shopping, doctor's appointments, and picking up pharmacy prescriptions. The absence of family leads to the phenomenon of *badante*.

4.3 Venetian Pace of Life

The slow and tranquil pace of life in Venice provides a uniquely satisfying atmosphere to the elderly, one of the reasons why so many choose to live here and continue living here. 17% of our interviewees mentioned the tranquility and quietness of Venice. 73% have lived in Venice for their entire lives and many are accustomed to the way of life in Venice, the quiet due to no auto traffic, and the relaxed atmosphere. As we can see by the data gathered by the "Living in Venice" project, many of their interviews resulted with data showing that the lifestyle in Venice is relaxed³⁹. Another aspect of the tranquility of Venice is the low crime rate, as seen in Figure 20. During our interviews, we asked about the safety of the city, and 67% thought that Venice was a very safe city. A few unique aspects of Venice contribute to its safety. Since there are no autos, there is no easy way for a bag snatcher or robber to get away. Venice is a "labyrinth", as described by Paolo, making it difficult for someone who does not know the city to escape. In relation to the close knit community of Venice, since many people know one another in their area, strangers are easily recognized as that. Safety is sometimes an issue for the elderly, as elderly are easy targets for crime. It would be harder for the elderly to be targeted in Venice, because they would be suspicious to people they didn't know, and living in close quarters with neighbors and friends provides another safety net for them.

Unfortunately, not all elders feel that Venice is adequately safe. Gabriella, a local shop keeper, did not feel safe walking through the streets alone at night, since they are sometimes very dark.

³⁸ Julie Marquis, Meggan Birmingham, Pedriant Peña, Akhil Kejriwal, *Challenges and Opportunities of a Young Venetian*. (Worcester, MA: Worcester Polytechnic Institute, 2008).

³⁹ Stephanie Miskell, Tobin McGee, Jenny Lund, Joshua Luther, *Life in the City of Water*. (Worcester, MA: Worcester Polytechnic Institute, 2008).

4.4 Mobility within Venice

Though many elders generally think Venice is a nice place to live, mobility is a challenge due to the lack of cars and private transportation and the many bridges and stairs. Specific problems with mobility, according to our interviewees, arose when shopping. Gabriella, a shop keeper in the *Santa Maria Nova campo*, compared the shopping in Venice to shopping in any other city, saying it was much harder because instead of taking her car to different stores and leaving shopping items in it, she has to carry everything with her for the whole shopping trip, going up and down bridges when necessary. Besides the difficulty of shopping, Paolo provided insight to the difficulties of mobility within Venice. He referred to the city as “rheumatic” rather than the more well know description of “romantic”. For elders with handicaps or who require assistance when walking, the stairs can be difficult to maneuver. This is not only in reference to public stairs outside, but also the stairs inside homes and apartment buildings. Paolo explained that when some people look for new apartments, the younger people tend to look for high floors that allow for more light. This can be a problem as they age, since it requires more steps. Depending on the level of mobility impairments, elders can be “trapped” by their apartments, requiring someone to bring them groceries or help them with errands. Some elders may be forced to move out of their higher story apartments – potentially into more expensive apartments with fewer stairs.

To aid the mobility challenged, the city of Venice has installed several mechanized bridge lifts. These machines provide a platform for a wheelchair or for someone to stand on, and through a process described as “difficult”, they are lifted to the top of the bridge. At the top, they must switch to the other side and repeat the process to go down. Unfortunately, these machines are not installed on every bridge. Ramps have been installed on some of the larger bridges in Venice – though not specifically to help the elderly. One of our interviewees explained that these were installed for the Venice marathon, but continue standing because “temporary means permanent in Venice.” These ramps help with mobility, but for someone in a wheelchair, it would be impossible to propel themselves up and over the temporary ramps.

Other Venetian elders who are not physically limited enjoy the excessive walking that is distinct to Venice. When visiting other cities, Signore Rinaldi would prefer to walk than travel by car. As the article referenced in section 3.1.1.1 shows, many residents of Centro Storico have

lower cholesterol, heart disease, and body fat percentage due to the lack of cars and increased amount of exercise²⁶ compared to Mestre and Lido.

4.5 Cost of Living

The rising cost of living can make it difficult for the retired population with no income to afford housing and maintain their lifestyle off of savings or pension. In our word cloud representing the negative aspects of Venice (Figure 26), cost of living appears as the most frequently mentioned disadvantage.



Figure 27: Interview "dislikes" word cloud

This topped the list of negative responses in both genders, with the male at 28% and female at 46%. Out of all nine topics in which negative responses were given, approximately 33% of those pertained to this cost of living.

The chief complaint with respect to cost of living was cost of housing. Many of our interviewees blamed tourism as the root of this issue. Our findings on what has happened as a result of the high cost of housing were best summarized by Umberto, “This place [the Settemari Club] used to be a bar and on the first, second, and third floors above there were families. Now, there is a hotel, a bed and breakfast.”

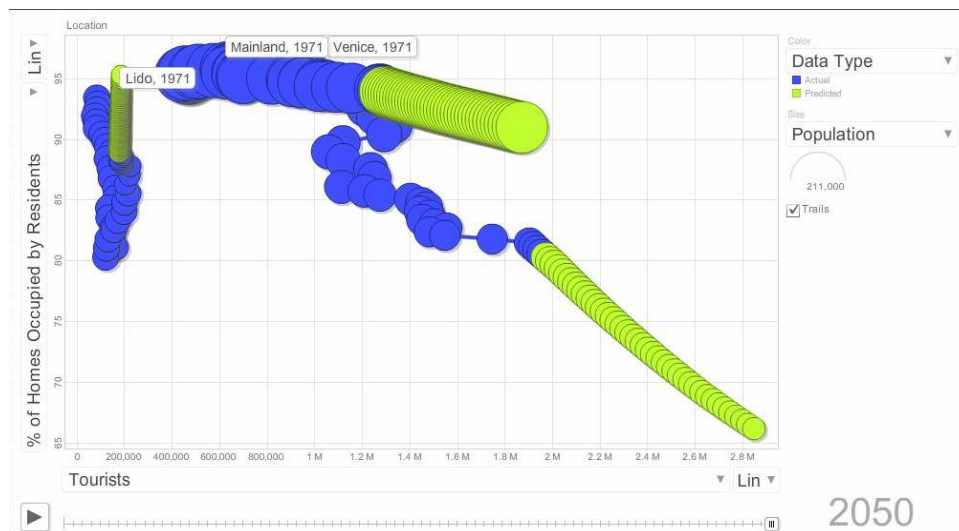


Figure 28: Decrease in homes occupied by residents

A law was passed in 1999 that made it significantly easier to establish a hotel in Venice³⁹. Figure 28 shows the decrease in homes occupied by permanent residents of Venice³⁹. Following this, many apartment complexes became much more profitable hotels. Those renters that remain pay astronomically high prices to keep their apartments (Pensions). According to many of our interviewees, the reason why they are able to continue living in Venice is because they own their apartments.

Property values have increased by 800%, forcing young people in Venice to leave if they can not find or afford housing^{38, 39}. This is a problem for the elderly if they can no longer be cared for by relatives within close proximity. Many elders need help with small everyday errands, an impossible task without aid. When these elders are left to live alone, they cannot function independently and rely upon the services of a *badante* or move to a rest home.

4.6 Venetian Programs and Services

Programs and services maintained by the municipality of Venice contribute to the ease and cost of living for Venetian elders; unfortunately not all programs are well-known or fully utilized. To better gauge the popularity and usage of programs offered to the elderly, we specifically asked in our interviews if they knew what was available to them. Though 41% knew some programs that are offered, only 10% took advantage of the programs if they were eligible. During our background research, we found specific mention of the Diamond Card, a service that is offered throughout Italy. Upon research of the Diamond Card while in Venice, we found that it

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convenzionati.
Offertari sconti ed agevolazioni.

Alimentari
 Adesivi per la casa e
 la persona
 Avvocati
 Calzoleri
 Carrozzerie
 Classificatori, Arredatori
 e Rifornitori elettrico
 Dipintori
 Farmacie
 Farmacie Comunitarie
 Grande Distribuzione
 Ottici/Optometristi
 Pasticcerie
 Parafarmacie
 Parrucchiere
 Piccola Distribuzione
 Sanitari
 Trasporti
 Veterinari

A more popular service that was mentioned by 18% of the elders we interviewed was the free *imob* card, made available once residents reach 75 years of age. This card, to be renewed each year, grants free usage of the *Vaporetti* in Venice. Though this card would be beneficial for elders, it is not offered until the age of 75; something Signore Bertolli was greatly looking forward to.

A different type of service that is offered for the elderly in Venice is the *Università della Terza Età* or the University of the Third Age. This is a University specifically oriented towards the elderly and offers all different types of classes. Signora Rinaldi, an active elder, has taken a few different types of classes at this University such as English and Venetian History, with plans

for a Computer instruction class soon. As much as she enjoys taking the classes, she also enjoys meeting new people in her classes. Other classes specifically for elders are offered through Auser, the Italian form of American Association of Retired Persons.

4.7 Venetian Healthcare

Hospitals and Rest Homes in Venice provide free and quality healthcare to the elder population. As people age, healthcare tends to become a more important quality of life factor. For this reason, during interviews we specifically asked how the interviewee felt about the healthcare system in Venice. Since healthcare in Italy is socialized, it is virtually free to those who need it. For some health procedures and prescriptions, we found that citizens can be charged a “ticket”, which is a small charge when either picking up the prescription or on the day of a procedure; this would be similar to a co-pay in the United States. For the elderly, this ticket charge can be waived if the total income of their household is below a certain threshold. Signore Panini was disappointed in this part of the system, because he knew that he was just above the threshold for the waiver of the ticket charge; though he did not know the exact amount of the threshold. Signore Panini is not alone in being disappointed, 12% of the responses for unfavorable aspects about Venice involved healthcare. Other interviewees agreed that the healthcare system is not working to the best of its ability; with many complaints regarding the lag time between making an appointment the time it takes to receive an appointment. The prolonged waiting time can cause problems for patients needing prompt medical procedures, and as Paolo would said, “it gives them time to die”, before they can receive care. Not all thought the healthcare system was inept, 12% of our interviewees found Venice’s healthcare system to be in good working order. Those who had had medical procedures were pleased with the care and services they received, and some, like Signora Rinaldi, were happy to pay higher taxes to cover the free healthcare.

When speaking with an administrator from the *Casa di Riposo San Lorenzo*, we were able to get her point of view on both the rest home, and *badante*. She first described the type of care offered at the rest home as 24 hour assistance, including rehabilitation programs and daily activities for the elderly. She knew of the phenomenon of *badanti*, and did not discredit their care. She explained that for some elders, *badanti* are not feasible caretakers, depending on the patient’s state of health and mind. Though the cost per month at the rest home was about 1600

euro per month, the government will pay for the elderly who cannot afford it. This was a plus to the socialization of medicine, when she compared Venice to the United States, who, according to her, “would not pay for the care of the elderly.”

4.8 Badanti

The availability and use of *badante* in Venice contribute to the lives of the elderly by providing assistance with mobility and care, offering companionship, and providing an alternative to assisted living. 27% of the people whom we interviewed had a *badante*, someone to help them to move around, run errands, and care for them. The interviewees who were asked about the presence of the *badanti* felt that they were good for the elderly; especially those who were no longer able to care for themselves and did not have family with the means to properly care for them. Several of the interviewees had worked with a *badante* whom they had hired to care for parents, saying that the *badanti* started to become popular about 10 years ago. Umberto Angelin believed that his mother had one of the first *badante* in Venice about 10 years ago. Signore and Signora Bertolli also had experience of working with a *badante* whom they hired for Signora Bertolli’s mother. They actually worked with two *badanti* before finding one who could adequately fulfill the role which they needed. The first seemed to be a good match, but had to leave early for personal reasons and the second was not able to fit in well with the family. The third, however, was accepted into the family and came to be very close, keeping in contact with them even after the passing of Signora Bertolli’s mother.

Throughout our interviews, we were able to speak with three *badanti*, two of whom were from the Ukraine, and the third was from Moldavia. These women couldn’t find appropriate work in their home countries and knew that they would find it here. The majority of the *badanti* are from Eastern Europe, and according to many interviewees, they come to Venice because they know the work is here. They typically work for three to five years, send money home to their families, and then return to their home countries. Two of the *badanti* also noted, however, that though the government has been regulating the *badanti* since 2002, there are still many *badanti* who are not regulated, as the process of becoming regulated (obtaining a *permesso di soggiorno*) can take a considerable amount of time and paperwork.

Paolo and Signore Rinaldi feel that having a *badante* is beneficial to the elderly psychologically, as it allows them to remain in their own homes where they feel most

comfortable. Through observations of the interactions between the *badanti* and the elderly, the relationship appears to be more personal than solely work-related, which is another factor that can lead to a greater comfort level for the elderly. Paolo feels that maintaining the ability to remain at home is an indication of being independent, thereby increasing one's sense of self-worth. According to Signore Rinaldi, the *badanti* are also good because they are filling a gap that has been created both by the decreasing population size of Venice as well as the reduced number of Venetian youth who become doctors and nurses. If the people with a *badante* were to move into a nursing home, there would not be sufficient staff to care for the increased number of dependent elderly.

As the *badanti* continue to become more popular, it becomes easier to find a *badante*, while the profession of being a *badante* continues to become more widespread and standardized. There are websites on which *badanti* can place advertisements, hoping to find work. On similar sites, it is also possible for families of an elderly person to post requirements for the type of person they are looking to hire. Through these sites as well as through interviews, we have found that the average salary of a *badante* is between 800 and 1200 Euros per month. According to Umberto, it is also now required that the *badante* be paid benefits, including paying taxes for them. Through research, we were also able to find schools that are specifically geared toward people who are planning to become a *badante*.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

We determined significant trends and themes among the opinions of Venetian elderly. From this, we were able to provide recommendations to further the research and depth of this project.

5.1 Conclusions

Many aspects of living Venice make it a nice place to grow old. The physical layout and nature of the city attributes to these aspects. Strong community bonds and the slow pace of life are two of the most important positive factors of Venice to the elderly. These are enhanced by the lack of pedestrian and traffic interaction, the layout of streets, shops, and *campi*, and the fact that walking is the primary mode of transportation. The native elderly have very strong ties to the city because of the rich culture and history that they were born and raised into.

Badanti are a positive aspect of being elderly in Venice because they are a solution to growing problem. *Badanti* have taken up a major role in the lives of the elderly who are no longer able to completely care for themselves. They are a popular alternative to nursing home care because the individual is able to remain at home. *Badanti* fill a role that was once filled by family, providing around the clock live-in care. In addition to the health and day to day care that they provide, they provide company and friendship. Their increasing numbers are an indication that the family units that once existed are becoming fewer in number.

There are a number of pertinent programs and services offered to the elderly in Venice. These programs and services are relatively effective at reaching their target population. However, obtaining information on all of them cannot be done from a central location. The most popular programs were related to economic relief and continuing education. Educational opportunities are readily available with classes offered by Auser and the *Università della Terza Età*, or the University of the Third Age. Economic relief services include free public transport available to those over 75.

For all its favorable attributes, Venice does have its negatives. The high cost of living is the largest problem for the elderly. This makes it very difficult to live comfortably on a limited income or savings. Mobility is also a challenge for those who have physical disabilities. Mobility is more of a challenge in Venice than typical cities because walking is such an integral part of moving around the city.

Overall, Venice is a good place to grow old, but it is not perfect. The elderly in this distinctive city face several challenges enhanced by its nature. Despite any shortcomings, the City is loved by its elderly.

5.2 Recommendations

This project initiated a study of the lives of elderly Venetians. It provides a base of information that is intended to be utilized by future research. The purpose of the following recommendations is to highlight areas for further investigation. These stem from questions that we were unable to answer due to the time and resource constraints of this Interactive Qualifying Project but are important in gaining a more complete understanding.

5.2.1 **Quality of Life Study of Elderly in Mestre**

The purpose of completing an identical study of the elderly in Mestre would be to see in what ways living in Centro Storico distinctively affects the lives of the elderly. Mestre and Centro Storico are a part of the same city, yet are very different as Mestre is located on the mainland and Centro Storico is an island. While they are part of the same city, there may be different challenges to the elderly in both places. Perhaps elders living in Mestre have less challenges with mobility since they can use autos, but are forced into assisted living sooner due to higher rates of heart disease, cholesterol, and body weight. Does Mestre have as great a need for *badanti*, or do they have less, if families can remain to live closer or together. A study of the elderly in Mestre would keep all variables such as the region and the people constant while being able to understand what differentiates the island from the mainland.

5.2.2 **Further Investigation of the *Badanti***

Though the *badanti* are more common in Venice, it was difficult for us to obtain detailed information on their backgrounds, legality, and numbers. It would be helpful to find out how many are legal immigrants licensed to work as *badanti* and how many are not. Those who are not legalized might be taking away from Venice's resources by living in Venice illegally – but would these downfalls be overlooked because of their necessity to care for the aging Venetians? More research and investigation of their nursing and healthcare backgrounds would also show if they are really qualified to provide care to the elderly. Determining the percentage of *badante* in the total population would help to show the demographic distribution of Venetians versus non-

natives. Further investigation of the home countries of *badanti* may provide insight as to why they come to Venice, is there a reason they come from certain places, and how did they find out about this type of work?

5.2.3 The Least Active Elderly

The least active elderly are those who are completely confined to their homes, either by choice, or by mobility limitations. This group of the elderly population was completely excluded from our research because we had no access to them. Being able to gather their opinions on life in Venice is valuable because they are inhabitants of Venice just as all the other elderly are. The information that they can provide about living in Venice will be another component in understanding what is entailed in being elderly in Venice. Without their equal representation, we can not come to a full understanding of the elderly population. Other useful information would be to determine what percentage of the elderly population they make up; to see if theirs is actually the common story to tell. A large amount of these elderly may explain why the population of Venice is skewed towards the third age group.

5.2.4 Elderly That Move to Centro Storico to Retire

This group was almost completely excluded from our research in this project. The purpose of focusing on them for study is to examine why they left where they came from to settle in Venice. It will aid in the insight into the lives of the elderly in Venice because their reasons for settling in Venice are key attraction points of the City to those who wish to spend their retirement years here. Their reasons for moving to Venice would also provide a more distinct description of “what they like about Venice”, while many elders we spoke with simply replied “everything” and required further prompting on the subject.

5.2.5 Elderly Venetians that have left Venice

The elderly Venetians that have left Venice are also another group of interest that we were unable to study. The reason(s) why they left would be of interest because those could serve to highlight aspects of the city that are seen as negatives and that they were problems enough for those people to leave. This information would be yet another piece to go into the understanding of what it is like to be elderly in Venice.

5.2.6 Construction of 'Day in the Life of' Storylines

The purpose of the 'Day in the Life' storylines is to combine the gathered information from this project into a cohesive and logical display. The storylines would revolve around the average waking hours in a day, highlighting the challenges and advantages to being elderly in Venice. Several of these story lines could be created, based on the various activity levels of Venetian elders. The stories would demonstrate what a specific type of person could do throughout the day, and tie in key findings from research on the elderly lifestyle in Venice.

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7 Appendix A: Annotated Bibliography

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- This article provides information concerning the prevalence of cancer in an area of the Veneto region, where a landfill is located.

Browne, J. P., C. A. O'Boyle, H. M. McGee, C. R. B. Joyce, N. J. McDonald, K. O'Malley, and B. Hiltbrunner. "Individual Quality of Life in the Healthy Elderly." *Quality of Life Research* 3, no. 4 (Aug., 1994): 235-244, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4034542> (accessed 10/04/2008).

- This journal provides not only general statistics on quality of life, but specifically applied towards elderly people. The cited sources of the article also provide many other valuable resources and references to further our research on the quality of life. This article provides a basis for our definition of quality of life for an elderly population.

Cancer in the elderly: Meeting the Challenge of an Aging Population. (1993). *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, 85(7), 532. doi:10.1093/jnci/85.7.532

- This journal article discusses the problems with aging, and specifically aging and cancer related together. It also shows evidence of a relation between northern Italy and cancer statistics.

Città di Venezia - Servizio Statistica e Ricerca. [cited 9/17/2008 2008]. Available from

<http://www.comune.venezia.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/5945>

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- This web page contains the compiled demographic data for the city of Venice for recent years. This information is crucial for our background research because it gives us hard numbers to look at and compare with other cities/countries. It gives us an idea of where Venice stands as well as where our target group stands numerically, financially, etc.

Other places in the web page gives information what Venice offers to the elderly, disabled, etc.

Eurostat Statistical Office of the European Communities. (2008). Aging Characterizes the Demographic Perspectives of the European Societies.

- This article provides aging statistics for European countries.

The Economist Intelligence Unit's Quality-of-Life Index. (2005) *The World in 2005*.

- This article gives a rating of various countries based on what they have determined to be the major factors involved in quality-of-life, including Material well-being, health, political stability and security, family life, community life, climate and geography, job security, political freedom, and gender equality.

Haas, M. (2008) *A Geriatric Peace? The Future of U.S. Power in a World of Aging Populations* - *International Security* 32:1. Retrieved 9/17/2008,

- This article will help us to define many statistics in our introduction. It discusses the overall age of the world, and the fastest ages countries. This will provide us with many statistics on the effects of aging countries, and provides statistics that will be useful.

Haas, Mark, L. 2008. Pax Americana Geriatrica. *Miller-McCune*.

- This article is very useful in the background of our project, particularly Move 1 of the introduction. This article gives an overview of what the world's age distribution is going to look like in the very near future. It also identifies the biggest problems that are going come about due to aging in the world's industrialized nations and gives statistics in support of these determinations.

INPS - Istituto Nazionale Previdenza Sociale. [cited 9/17/2008 2008]. Available from

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- This web page gives an overview of the Italian social security system. It gives us needed information for qualification for the system and what it has to offer. This also helps us

focus in on our target group because that is who this program is primarily designed to service.

International Living.com. (2008). *Quality of Life Index 2008*. <http://www.il-ireland.com/il/qofl2008/index.php>

- This reference provides a ranking of countries based on their determinants of quality of life, which included cost of living, leisure and culture, economy, environment, freedom, health, infrastructure, risk and safety, and climate. According to their standards, Italy was ranked at number 7 on their list, with their lowest score being that of cost of living.

Krüger, A. (2008). Private Household Income in the Regions of the European Union, 2004.

- This article provides information concerning average income in the EU.

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L'Informazione Statistica Sull'Assistenza agli Anziani in Italia: Rapporto di indagine
Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri.

- This report pays particular attention to the problem of pension for older people in Italy. As the older population is growing so rapidly, and they are allowed to retire at 57 years of age with 35 years of working, the number of people living by pension is increasing rapidly. Also, Italy's pension rates are among the highest in all of the countries involved in the OECD, making it difficult for them to keep providing the benefits as they are now. For their purposes, 65 was used as the age when one becomes "un anziano".

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<http://www.gdrc.org/uem/qol-define.html> (accessed 9/17/2008).

- This web page is a compilation of several different definitions of quality of life. This information is very useful in the development of our methodology because it serves as guidelines for determining what aspects of life we are studying.

Norwalk California Senior Services. <http://www.ci.norwalk.ca.us/seniorservices.asp> (accessed 10/19/2008)

- This site provides information concerning a program offered to the elderly in Norwalk, California, which includes classes for the elderly as well as services such as assistance with taxes. The program also includes the availability of home delivered meals.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2007). *Pensions at a Glance- Public Policies Across OECD Countries 2007 Edition*

- This organization discusses, in this particular article, information concerning pension in Italy and tells what percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP) is utilized for pensions each year by the various countries which belong to the OECD.

Population Projection of the EU:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1996,45323734&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&screen=welcomeref&open=/populat/proj&language=en&product=EU_MASTER_population&root=EU_MASTER_population&scrollto=0

- This site provides valuable information in regards to the median age in European countries as well as the ability to make tables and charts of ages in various regions of European countries.

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. <http://www.laparks.org/dos/senior/seniorvolunteer.htm> (accessed 10/19/2008)

- This site provides information about a program offered in Los Angeles which allows the elderly to use their skills after retirement.

Services for the Alone and Frail Elderly. <http://www.catholiccharities.org/en/cms/?387> (accessed 10/19/2008)

- This site provides information concerning a program offered to the elderly population of Houston, Texas to ensure their health and safety.

Testa, M. A., & Simonson, D. C. (1996). Assessment of Quality of Life. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 335(7), 520-522. doi:10.1056/NEJM199608153350715

- This article discusses various components to consider when thinking of quality-of-life. The article mentions that the term “quality-of-life” has become an increasingly more popular way to measure and evaluate health.

United Nations Programme on Ageing. [cited 9/17/2008 2008]. Available from http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/research_papers.html (accessed 9/17/2008).

- This web page provides links to a very detailed report on how the world’s population is aging as well as several tables, graphics, and charts that clearly identify and illustrate the exact age distributions within the nations of the world and their project distributions for the very near future.

8 Appendix B: Initial Interview Questions

General

How long have you lived in Venice?

(If not forever) How does it compare to anywhere you have lived before?

What do you particularly like or enjoy about your life in Venice?

What do you particularly dislike about living in Venice?

Career/Life Skills

What was/is your occupation?

If retired, do you still use skills from your career, i.e. in a hobby or volunteer group?

Healthcare

What is your opinion on the healthcare system?

-Is there anything you particularly like or dislike about it?

Do you have problems with mobility?

-If so, how do you cope with it?

-If so, what is your opinion on what is being done to accommodate you?

-Is there anything you would like to see in particular?

Do you have a home health aide?

-If so, is he/she a live-in?

Family/Social

Do you live alone or with family?

-If with family, what members?

Do you have children/grandchildren?

-Do you babysit for them?

-Do you perform other tasks to aide with the family, i.e. cooking, cleaning?

What do you do in your spare time?

-Do you belong to any social/sports clubs/organizations?

Other Contacts

Do you know anyone else in Venice who would be willing to speak with us?

Do you know of anyone in Mestre who would be willing to speak with us?

9 Appendix C: Interview Forms

9.1 Interview Form for the Elderly

Dato: _____ Ora: _____ Luogo: _____

Nome: _____ Età: _____

Informazione di contatto: _____

1. Lei parla inglese?

2. Possiamo video registrare quest'intervista? Se no, audio registrare? Se no, possiamo annotare che cosa Lei dica?

3. Se posso domandare, da dove Lei viene adesso? Dove va?

4. Lei è in pensione o lavora ancora?

5. Che cosa fa/faceva per lavoro?

6. Lei è nato(a) a Venezia?

7. Se no, per quanti anni ha vissuto a Venezia? Perché è venuto(a) a Venezia?

8. Che cosa, in particolare, si piace di abitando a Venezia?

9. Lei sa della Carta Diamante o qualcos'altro che Venezia ha per gli anziani? Si piace il programma? Come vuole che sia perfezionato?

10. Che cosa si dispiace di abitando a Venezia?

11. Lei abita solo(a) o con la Sua famiglia?

12. Se abita con la famiglia, con chi in particolare?

13. Di solito, che cosa Lei fa nel giorno?

14. Che fa nel Suo tempo libero?

9.2 Interview Form for *Badante*/Caretakers

1. Da dov'è originalmente?

2. Perché Lei ha scelto di essere un(a) *badante*?

3. Per quanti anni Lei ha vissuto a Venezia?

4. Lei ha lavoro in un'altra parte d'Italia prima di Venezia?

5. Perché Lei ha scelto di lavorare in Italia?

6. Come Si piace la vita a Venezia paragonato alle altre regione in cui Lei viveva?

7. Lei sa di alcuni programmi o servizi per gli anziani a Venezia?

8. Altri commenti:

9.3 Interview Form for Directors of Programs and Services

1. Cos'è il scopo principale del Suo programma o servizio?

2. Per chi è il programma fatto (i maschi, le donne, le persone con i problemi di mobilità)?

3. Quanti anziani sono coinvolto nel programma?

4. Che cosa fa il programma per migliorare la qualità della vita per gli anziani?

5. Lei sa di altri programmi in cui le persone nel Suo programma sono anche coinvolto?

6. Seconda Lei, Venezia è una città adatto agli anziani o no? Perché?

7. Altri Commenti:

9.4 Interview Form for Retirement Homes

1. Quanti anziani abitano qui? _____
2. Avete abbastanza infermiere per occuparsi degli anziani? Se no, come risarcite?

3. Che cose possono fare gli anziani a Venezia per avere una buona qualità della vita?

4. Perché è Venezia una città difficile per gli anziani?

5. Avete i programmi qui per tenere gli anziani occupato come i giochi di carte o bocci ed anche i programmi per gli anziani ad uscire?

6. Cos'è, secondo Lei, la ragione principale che questi anziani abitano qui e non rimangono a casa con la famiglia o qualcuno per aiutarli?

7. Se Lei sarebbe stato (a) un anziano (un'anziana), vorrebbe abitare a Venezia o no, perché?

8. Comunicate con altre case di riposo dei programmi che offrite agli anziani ed avete trovato informazione utile?

10 Appendix D: Interview Transcripts

Dato: 11-03-2008

Ora: 11:00-12:00

Luogo: Campo Bandiera e Moro

Interviewees: Michelina, Antonia, Chiara, Angelina, Mary

15. Lei parla inglese?

None of them spoke English.

16. Possiamo video registrare quest'intervista? Se no, audio registrare? Se no, possiamo annotare che cosa Lei dica?

Video or Audio recordings were not available. Received consent to take notes on what was said.

17. Se posso domandare, da dove Lei viene adesso? Dove va?

Not applicable. Came from home and returning home after.

18. Lei è in pensione o lavora ancora?

Michelina, Anotonia, and Chiara are retired. Angelina and Mary are badante.

19. Che cosa fa/faceva per lavoro?

Michelina was a teacher. Antonia was a teacher for younger children (7-10 years of age). Chiara worked as the secretary of a lawyer.

20. Lei è nato(a) a Venezia?

- Michelina, Antonia, and Chiara were all born in Venice.
- Mary and Angelina were not born in Venice.

21. Se no, per quanti anni ha vissuto a Venezia? Perché è venuto(a) a Venezia?

Mary and Angelina have lived in Venice for 3 years and came to Venice for work. they are both from the Ukraine. Mary has worked in other parts of Italy (Naples area) and originally came to Italy 7 years ago. They did not have any job opportunities or money in the Ukraine, therefore, they came to Venice.

22. Che cosa, in particolare, si piace di abitando a Venezia?

Antonia likes Venice because she was born here and it is her home city. She likes to remember when she was young and was able to play with friends in the campo. She also says that Venice is very beautiful and unique and that she enjoys just sitting and watching the people. Mary likes Venice because it is interesting and very different.

23. Lei sa della Carta Diamante o qualcos'altro che Venezia ha per gli anziani? Si piace il programma? Come vuole che sia perfezionato?
Mary does not know much about the Diamond Card or other services for the elderly because Michelina is sick and does not take part in anything. Antonia was aware of the Diamond Card but does not comment and changes the subject.
24. Che cosa si dispiace di abitando a Venezia?
Mary dislikes that food is so expensive here in comparison to other regions within Italy. Luba: "Life in Venice is... 'boh'... well, it is difficult. But I would stay here willingly".
25. Lei abita solo(a) o con la Sua famiglia?
Michelina lives with Mary (her badante). Antonia and Angelina (sisters) live together with Chiara (their badante).
26. Lei ha una famiglia?
- Angelina: was married, had 3 children. One daughter who teaches high school in Belluno. One son who married a Japanese person who was a singer at the Fenice. Her husband was a tailor.
 - Antonia is a "zitella", which means she was never married and never had children.
 - Michelina was married but never had children.
 - Mary has 2 children who still live in the Ukraine. Says the amount of time she will stay in Venice depends on the health of the women who she cares for.
27. Di solito, che cosa Lei fa nel giorno?
Michelina is sickly so she does not do much. Goes out to the campo, maybe watches a little bit of TV, but cannot hear well. Antonia and Angelina also do not do much outside of going to the campo.
28. Health Problems:
- Angelina had a stroke 3 years ago.
29. Other notes:
- The badante are regulated in Italy (since 2002) and they have to have a "permesso di soggiorno". Getting the permesso takes a long time so a lot of badante don't do it. It is impossible for the government to regulate everyone because there are too many of them.

Interview Transcript

Date: 11/3/08

Location: Campo Bandiera Moro o de la Bragora

Start Time: 11:18am

Interviewee: Graziella

DOB/Age: 11/24, 88 years

-Has lived here all her life

-Was recently hospitalized and then could not leave home for 17 months due to a problem with her legs, had hard time walking around

-Has two grown children, one male and one female

-The son lives in Mestre, the daughter lives in Centro Storico

-She likes living here and has never thought of moving elsewhere

-Lives with her sister, very close in age, unknown exact and a female badante

-Typical day consists of taking a morning trip to the campo, going back home for lunch and a nap, and possibly coming back to the campo in the afternoon

-Also enjoys the fact that she has nieces and nephews living in Venice (according to accompanying badante, she always talks about them)

-Stated hospital care in Venice is great, the doctors and nurses were very attentive and helpful

-Her children were always paying visits to her and take her out to eat

-Daughter was coming to visit that afternoon

-Did have a full working life (although unable to extract specifics as to occupation)

-Enjoys going to church and resting

(Interview moved at this point to the accompanying badante)

-From Moldovia

-Came to Venice because she was in need of work

-Also came because her aunt moved to Venice as well

-Likes living in Venice, no cars, the city is very calm, very beautiful

-Was previously a nurse in Moldovia

-Stated the pay was not high enough and wanted to send kids to school

-stated had no dislikes about Venice, stated she loved old cities

-has lived in Venice for 1yr and 5months

(Interview switched back to the elderly woman at this point)

(interview began to wrap up)

-Stated she was going home for lunch then a nap

-Her daughter was coming to visit and then she was going to the doctor for her ears

End Time: 11:45am

Interview Transcript

Date: 11/5/08

Location: Campo Bandiera Moro o de la Bragora

Start Time: 12:05pm

Interviewee: Antonio

Age: 67?

-Has lived in Venice for 40 years

-First time working in Venice was in 1962, worked for a hotel until 1998

-In 1998, started working in a school and did that for 7 years

-Was moved to several different countries for that job

-Worked in London for 2 years, France for 1 year, and Germany for 6 months

-Is retired now

-“I like Venice because I can spend all day seeking something different,” referring to churches, monuments, etc.

-In other cities “Life is too quick”

-Has a wife and one son and one daughter living in Venice

-Stated “There is nothing about Venice that I want to change”

-Was going to ride to Lido on his bike

-Does not participate in any clubs or activities because he likes to do his own thing and live a very quiet life

-Does own a car, does go around the mainland and out of the country when he wants/needs to

End Time: 12:17pm

Interview Transcript

Interviewee: Francesco

Date: 11/12/2008

Location: VPC

Start Time: 5:13pm

Age: 89, Born in 1920

Advantages:

There are no automobiles, its not fast, no pollution – this is important for old people because the air is better and they can spend more time out walking without being in danger of dying – getting hit by a car. You can meet friends to talk and have a drink. Drinking is good for you:

“He who drinks well, sleeps well

He who sleeps well, doesn’t think bad thoughts

He who doesn’t think bad thoughts, doesn’t do bad things

He who doesn’t do bad things, goes to paradise

So, to drink, means to go to paradise”

Laughing is good for you.

In Venice, after you’re 60, you get a special card. You get an imob card for free so you don’t have to pay for the vaporetto or bus. You can get a W.C. card – free use of public toilets (for elderly residents, 3 Euro for other residents). To get a card you go to City Hall, to the special office, show your i.d. to prove your age, and get a card. The Diamond Card is for all of Italy, you get a reduction in some shops for some goods. Hospitals aren’t special for Venice, if you’re sick and have money you can get hospice care.

Venice isn’t just cement, there are different styles of architecture, it’s “not depressing”. After work or dealing with family problems you just “need something” and Venice is there.

It's difficult for some to move around Venice, especially for older people. They can't reach a lot of places, they are limited by their mobility. There is a lot of walking, the boats don't go everywhere. There are a lot of steps on bridges, steps in apartments – there are not many elevators in Venice and they can't be installed. If you have rheumatism or arthritis it's hard to walk and go up stairs. Heart disease is less common in Venice because the walking is good for you – proof from the recent newspaper article. Many think Venice is “romantic” but for them it can be “rheumatic”. A lot of old people are disabled with wheelchairs. The electric lifts cost a lot of money. There are laws in Italy that require them but they are too much of a problem and are just installed and then left there, they don't all work. The ramps were for the Venice marathon and are only “temporary” but temporary means forever in Venice, they will stay up for most of the year.

40% of the population is old, and getting older and older because the youth is leaving as housing is expensive and hard to find. The administration of the city grants rights to the hotels, and now there is no space left for apartments. Bed and Breakfasts buy apartment buildings. This is bad for old people if the young move out because they are far from family and can't help to take care of the old people, like run errands to pharmacies or take them to the doctors. There are volunteers to help older people, but no official system so family is very important. Sometimes people die in their apartments and aren't found for a week or a month.

There is no robbery in Venice because there are no get away cars, no bag snatching, old people are targets in other cities but not in Venice. There is no burglary or robbery at home. Everyone knows everyone so you'd know if you were getting scammed – like if someone tried to come to your door, you'd know if it was someone or not. Venetians are curious to unknown faces. It's a difficult town because it's a maze/labrynth – robbers can't escape.

Venice is the most expensive town in Italy because goods arrive by train, then truck, boat, shoulder, etc. it's important for old people because not many are rich and live off small pensions. The supermarket is hard to shop at because you can't carry it all so you have to go everyday and can't buy in bulk which might be cheaper.

Venetians don't get mad, they aren't high strung, they like to joke and have humor – at funerals too.

Microlending/Microbank

Men and women both participate. It's the equivalent of a Christmas club, pool money, then lend money throughout the year with interest. It's a savings club that you pay weekly dues and then split the money at the end and there should be more than you started with. They have dinner together, use a bar as the headquarters. It is a big form of socialization, popular and widespread. It's an excuse to get together once a week. The state tries to forbid it because it's a form of a bank.

Disadvantages of being old – the multiplying of impolite young people – youth don't give up seats on the vaporetto, there is a lack of respect, more impolite than ever before.

Lots of friends at funerals, post the picture and time and date, then simple friends go to the funeral to pray.

Venice has a university of the third age, there is a lot of interest in this where you can learn new things and meet new people. Bruno doesn't have a favorite bar because he doesn't like to discuss opinions, women, or politics – he loves only himself. He's still working so he doesn't need to hang out. He has a lot of hobbies and moves on to something new when he gets tired of it.

He used to be a rugby player, and it was his dream to be a soldier. When he was 18 he went to Spain to try to enlist during their civil war.

-“I loved the war.” (referring to World War II) “I don't know why, but I did.”

-Tried to enlist in Spain when he was 18 but was not allowed (during Spanish Civil War)

-Was a paratrooper/diver for Italy in WWII

-Had been a fascist youth previous to this (under Mussolini)

-Was captured in 1945 by the British and condemned to death (because he was a commando)

- Life was spared when the Queen of England forbade the execution of any more captured enemy soldiers
- Then escaped and lived in Algiers and worked as a cook
- Was recaptured when took a British flight
- Went under the protection of the Americans
 - Knew the frogman commander and was able to go to work for the allied forces diving to remove mines for three years.
 - Received recognition from the Secretary of State for the high volume of mines he destroyed
- Has been mentioned in 3 three books
 - Was featured by a famous cartoonist
- “I suffer not about what I did but what I was enabled to do.” (possibly referring to when he was an Italian commando fighting for the axis powers but unsure)

He lives with his wife, some lives next door and he has a nephew in Venice. His daughter lives in Milano, she is “crazy” and was a pin-up girl. She married a camera man, but first they lived together for 7 years, then after 3 years of marriage they got divorced. He has an 18 year old granddaughter who won’t live with her mother. His son is the captain of a carnival cruise ship. He gets 2 months off at a time and he lives next door when he’s not working. His wife is American from Los Angeles. Son and wife live in Venice, they’d rather stay here than the states.

His experiences in healthcare were good, he had cancer but is recovered now. He had left and right knee operations and eye problems. The people were nice, good people, good operations and doctors. Sometimes you have to wait for care which gives you “time to die” before your operation. Sometimes you have to go to Mestre for appointments because the best doctors are there but it’s a problem to get there for some.

Quotes:

- “No danger of being killed” (referring to no pedestrian/traffic interaction)

- “We can meet a friend to talk over a glass of wine.” (referring to ease of socialization)
- “Venice is not depressing.”
- “Venice is not romantic but rheumatic [for the elderly].”
- “Some bridges have a diabolic mechanism.” Referring to bridge elevators
- “Temporary means forever in Venice.” Referring to the accessibility ramps that are in place on the perimeter bridges for the Venice Marathon from October to January
- “For the new generations, we have jobs, housing is the problem.”
- “The new generation is dangerous” (referring to that they are moving out of Venice and are not able to live with and care for their elderly)
- “Sometimes when people die, they aren’t found until one or two weeks later.”
- “In Venice, we know everybody.”
- “In other towns, you may say hello to your neighbors, you get in your car, and that’s it.”
- “If we see an unfamiliar face we are curious; wondering who they are and who they are looking for.” (good sense of security/safety)
- “Venice is a labyrinth.”
 - “A thief tried to escape and [the locals] were able to surround him. He wound up running right into a canal trying to escape.”
 - “We were able to track another thief by his footsteps on the wet ground.”

-“Venice is the most expensive town in Italy.”

-“Things arrive by train or truck, then boat, then cart, then by the delivery person carrying it.”

-“Most elderly live on small pensions.”

-“You have to carry everything when you buy it.”

-“Venetians like to see the humorous side of life.”

-“There are a lot of people at your funeral.”

-(with reference to all the people that attend your funeral) “Simple friends, people that you would see for one to two minutes each day and talk about politics.”

-“The past does not exist, the future does not exist, and the present is fast becoming the past.”

-“We have the university of the ‘Third Age’.”

-“I like to study something and when I am tired, I change.”

-“I’ll get back to university when I’m 90.”

End Time: 6:36pm

Interview Transcript

Interviewee: Angelica

Date: 11/19/2008

Location: Ghetto Campo

Start Time: 12:00pm

Age: 70, Born in 1938

She was born in 1938, she is almost 71. She was born in Venice and has always lived here. She worked as a baker for a few years until she was married. She had two daughters, and has four grandchildren. She was born in Venice so she likes it, it's always tranquil, but there are too many tourists. She likes everything. There is little service on Vaporetti and they are expensive, now there is a system. It's not hard for her to walk but it's a little cold now in the season. She didn't know much about services, she doesn't have interest because she doesn't need it. She lives with her husband. She has one daughter in Padova, her daughters husband is from there. The other lives in Venice. The healthcare system has always worked well, she has needed it often and it was efficient for her. During the day she takes care of her granddaughter.

End Time: 12:20pm

Interview Transcript

Interviewee: Christina

Date: 11/19/2008

Location: Beppe's Bar

Start Time: 10:50am

Age: 85, Born in 1923

-“Life in Venice is good, expensive, but good.”

-Likes everything about Venice

-Was married to another Venetian (a baker) in 1944

-Daughter was born in 1946 and she had to go to work as well because she was sick

-Cleaned houses and completed various other odd jobs

-Husband died in 1985

-Lived alone for a while after he died but then daughter moved in and still lives there today

-Likes the people in Venice, gets along well with everyone

-Was born in Venice, still lives in the house that she grew up in

-Has knee issues so mobility is a problem

End Time: 11:08

Interview Transcript

Date: 11/17/08

Location: Bertolli Residence

Start Time: 10:30am

Interviewee: Signor & Signora Bertolli

Born in: 1934

He comes from a long line of gondoliers, his father, his grandfather. He finished doing that at 20, but did it during the summer as a summer job with his father – who was the last private gondolier in the city for rich people. In '47 and '48 after the war he was 13 and 14 and was the gondolier to the princess Aspasia of Greece. He took Peggy Guggenheim from St. Marks to the palace of the princess.

He went to art school and was a draftsman, and the director of construction and maintenance of the airport. He worked for 30 years at the airport and then retired in '88. Born in 1934, 74 now. Thinks the free transportation is for 75+ not 70. He likes everything about Venice, Signora Rinaldi does too. He worked for 3 or 4 years after retiring and thinks it's great that he can keep doing things without having to worry about money. He does it for pleasure, doesn't need to make any more money. They organized their money enough to live off their pension – it's not a lot but it's enough to live, eat, travel, go to the beach in the summer, mountains in the winter, it's good enough for clothes, the occasional coffee out.

They don't like:

There is too much tourism, too many houses for foreigners who aren't there all year round. The Venetians disappeared. Venice is a jewel but the administration is bad, they throw away the value and spirit of Venice. Venice is "losing its heart". The heart of Venice is the way of life, the personal relationships. There are small groups of communities, but community used to be more widespread over everything. He has a big family, sisters, grandkids, daughters, nephews, nieces. He has 4 sisters in Venice and 1 brother in Mulano which is near Mestre, close enough that they can visit often. For him it is a great wealth to have a big family, strong community with Parish, Signora Bertolli sings in the choir and does Gregorian chants. They have a lot of friends in the

church, they socialize with them too. The most important things to him are family, parish, settimanari, and a few art school friends.

Signora Bertolli thinks its an uncomfortable place to live in, its difficult to move around the tourists and find stores.

Signor Bertolli went to an Art school which is like a vocational school for craftsmen, there are very few in Italy where they can learn different crafts like architecture, jewelry, ceramics, woodwork. His friend was an artist and then became a priest when he was 30, he did all the artwork in his church.

He likes Venice how it is, he wouldn't change anything, except for the administration because they throw away the core of Venice.

This Friday is the Salute celebration, the area will be crowded.

He doesn't really know about the Diamond Card, he doesn't need it for what he does. He thinks free transportation is 75 not 70. You have to renew the transportation card every year because the city pays for it, not Italy.

The healthcare system is good, he has cyanic nerve problems in his leg. It takes a long time to get an appointment, he got an earlier one by knowing people – Venice is all about having connections. His daughter is a pediatrician and he knows she puts a lot of effort into her patients so he knows his doctors care about him too. Sometimes you'd have to go to another place to get a sooner appointment, but all healthcare is free – difficult to get, but free and good.

Signora Bertolli's mother had a badante for a few years from Moldavia, she gave very good care and was accepted as part of the family. They helped her buy a house in Moldavia, gave her daughter jewelry at her wedding. They treated her like family, and Signora Bertolli's mother was very happy. They paid the badante and paid her taxes too. They still see her, found her husband a job and had a good relationship on both ends. 900 euro and taxes per month was the salary. The badante come here for the money, they know its here. The first badante of her mother was good too but she had to leave early. The second one was polish and she didn't accept the conditions of

the job and remained as an outsider to the family – not sure if this was due to culture or her personality. The last badante was the best, she stayed for 4 years until her mother died. Signora Bertolli father wouldn't accept help or a badante, he didn't like the idea of strangers helping him.

In the old days 10 people lived together and helped take care of each other, but people had to live on their own and work so nursing homes and badante came along to help take care of old people. In the 50's there was a boom of people buying their own apartments so many people in their generation own their own houses and don't want to leave them.

The population of Venice used to be 160,000, now it's only 50,000, there used to be industries and jobs for everyone but all the active ones are leaving. 20-30,000 tourists daily, Venice is a big spot for tourists. Venice used to produce things, now it just sells things.

Mobility is not a problem for them, Venetians walk, and that's what they do. Some of their friends go dancing a lot, they find activities through Settimari. They do everything together, church, Settimari.

End Time: 11:30am

Interview Transcript

Interviewee: Graziano

Date: 11/19/2008

Location: Café off Strada Nova

Start Time: 9:55

Age: 70, Born in 1938

Born in 1938, has lived in Venice all his life. Likes everything and nothing. Life is beautiful in Venice. He likes the human contact, finding people in bars – this happens more than on the mainland because there are cars there. He also likes the communication. He doesn't like how everything has changed, now there is no work or different industries here. He doesn't like the politics of it, and his impression is that people don't want to work enough to make enough money to stay so they leave. He doesn't want to accuse anyone of things that go badly but he thinks they spent too much money on the new bridge, it's nice but everything is about money. He's not part of any organizations, he goes to a bar twice a day but it's nothing special, he plays cards with his friends, he has a very simple life. He was an artisan for work, he was a jeweler, repairing and making gold and silver items. He doesn't like the healthcare system, he thinks it doesn't work to its maximum, it takes too long to get an appointment and recovery time is long. He lives with his wife and has two kids who both live on Lido because they couldn't find a house and it's expensive to live on the island. He has been a jeweler since he was 12, he learned a trade like many children and would do only that. He knows there are a lot of programs for elders but he doesn't use them. Auser offers classes in theater language and history and gardening, he doesn't go but he knows they offer classes for them to get involved. He doesn't know much about badanti except they help families that are busy with work and children and offer assistance to the elderly. Many people get badanti after they go home from the hospital. He knows people with badanti. He is retired now, he closed his jewelry shop after 52 years, now he is on a pension. There isn't a lot of work so they closed a lot of shops due to people moving out. He

makes things at home as a hobby to pass time and when there is an opportunity to do something he'll do it. Cost of living is very expensive.

End Time: 10:22am

Interview Transcript

Interviewee: Francesca

Date: 11/19/2008

Location: Trattoria Bar Ponti

Start Time: 11:12am

Age: 79, Born in 1929

-Was a taylor, now retired

-Currently lives off her husband's pension

-Has never lived outside of Venice

-“It's a different life than on the mainland.”

-The people that come to live here are very rich

-Is is very expensive to live here

-Lives alone currently

-Has one son that lives in Milano

-Dislikes the large amount of tourists

-Reiterated that it is very expensive to live in Venice

-Stayed because she likes it here, the atmosphere

-Will stay here as long as she can

-Life is much more clam here

-Life in the mainland is much too hectic

-It is a little hard to move around the city

-Bridges tend to be very hard for older people

-Stated that she leads a very simple life

-Stays at home mostly, only going out to go shopping or to the theatre or for a drink at the bar

-Will sometimes play cards

-Stated her life used to be much more hectic when she was raising a family

-Utilizes senior discounts where applicable, at the theatre and cinema

-Stated the healthcare system was “sad”

- You can wait months or years for a procedure if you are poor
- If you can pay for it then you are taken right away
- Feels Venice is very safe
- Much more calm than the mainland
- There is some pickpocketing on the vaporetti but that is about it
- Does not have a badante personally but knows many people who do

End Time: 11:36am

Interview Transcript

Interviewee: Michele

Date: 11/18/2008

Location: VPC

Start Time: 5:46pm

Age: 71, Born in 1937

-Currently an actor and playwright

-Previous occupations included set manager and director and growing mushrooms in South Africa

-Is also an entrepreneur

-Invented the “wedding in Venice”

-Invented the inexpensive plastic boots with the hard plastic soles and tide height markers for acqua alta

-Wrote the play: *Naturalia non Sunt Turpia* ovvero *La Storia della Medicina Narrata da un Merdasser*

-Translates plays into Venetian

-Had worked in Bologna for 10 years (unknown which 10) but wanted to return to Venice so he left that behind

-Dislikes the hordes of tourists

-Likes:

-That Venetians are hearty; despite all the negatives about Venice (the tourists, the tides, etc.) they still live longer

-That there are no cars, no pollution

-No pedestrian/traffic interaction

-The spirit of Venice

-The quiet nights

-The community aspect of Venice, has many friends here

-Philosophy on life: “I do many things so long as I like them.”

-Gondoliers are a clan- they discriminate against women who wish to become them

- They also dislike him because he invented a boat with four rowers and had 25 seats
- Walking is always a positive because you can see friends as you go from place to place
 - “Here you know everyone.”
- Currently lives with his 2nd wife
 - Has 4 children and 8 grandchildren
 - None of them live in Venice, they live all over Europe
- Writes in his spare time
 - His dream is to create a Venetian medical dictionary
 - highlight origins of Venetian names for ailments
- ACTV pass is for 75+, currently not old enough to possess one
- Does not frequent any bars
 - However will go to the Irish pub to watch sports games
- Has not needed to use the healthcare system much
 - Has many friends in medicine when he needs help so he can basically circumvent the system
 - Was going to study medicine himself but experimented a little in everything else instead

(Bruno, who was also present, began to speak more about his healthcare experiences)

- Went to the hospital this morning to find out that his cataract removal surgery had been postponed
- Stated people in the south of Italy can receive care much faster

(Interview switched back to Maurizio at this point)

- Is a member of a rugby club
 - The Octopus Club
 - Bruno is the president
 - He is one of the members who watches from the sidelines, the 40 & 50 year olds play

End Time: 6:30pm

Interview Transcript

Interviewee: Pietro

Date: 11/12/2008

Location: VPC

Start Time: 4:00pm

Age: 67, born in 1941

-Was born in Venice, lived here whole life but does own a vacation home in the mountains

-Is retired, was an electrician until 1993 when he officially retired, but worked on the side until 2000

- When asked what he likes about living in Venice, stated “everything”

-Dislikes tourist shops

-Lives with his wife, has no children

-Likes to practice various sports everyday

- running

- rowing (Settemari Club)

- Bicycling

-Does not know of any programs that cater specifically to the elderly, stated does not need them

-Has however they are creating centers for the elderly (unknown if recreational)

-Just enrolled in an English course

-Does most of his shopping on the mainland because prices are cheaper

-Owns his own apartment but states housing costs are very high

-Stated knows some about badanti

- From what he has seen, they are live in, 24 hour caretakers who usually take their clients out around midday

- Stated he started seeing them about 10 years ago

-When asked if either of his parents had a badante, he stated father died when he was young, mother was able to take care of herself until she died

-Stated the woman that lives below him has a badante because her son lives on the mainland

-Does not frequent bars

-Stated does know that for those over 65, healthcare is free of income is below a certain value

- Income defined as money being received from your pension plus a factor derived from the value of your dwelling
 - Currently has to pay just the deductible (universal healthcare)
 - Utilizes senior discounts when available but does not participate in an organized program, i.e. discounted or expunged cover charges at restaurants
 - Has heard of the Diamond Card
 - Belongs to several different groups
 - Settemari Club
 - Informal group that goes hiking in the mountains
 - Is extremely active
 - Has ran the Boston and New York Marathons
 - Aiming to run the New York Marathon when he is 70 (2011)
 - Is currently training for a cross-country ski marathon this winter
 - Began participating in sports when he was Prof. Carrera's age (high 40s low 50s?)
 - Hiked Mount Kilimanjaro last summer
 - Ran first marathon (New York) in 1993 when he was 52
 - Stated has not slowed down as he advances in years, is in fact speeding up
- End Time: 4:45 pm

Interview Transcript

Interviewee: Genario

Date: 11/18/2008

Location: Bareton (butcher shop)

Start Time: 10:28am

Age: 53, Born in 1955

-Has always lived in Venice

-Has always worked in the interview location

-Not like in America where you switch jobs every few years

-Likes everything about Venice

-Dislikes the expense of living

-Housing is very expensive

-Everything is very expensive

-That is why there is no new generations living in Venice

-Quality of Life is good in Venice overall

-Always meet friends in the streets

-Reiterated that it is every expensive though

-When asked about any type of senior discounts that he offers, he replied that "This shop is a fair shop, everyone pays the same."

-Belongs to 7 or 8 different associations

-Several sports organizations

-Rialto Mio

-Serenieima (?sp)

-Pachabenefica

-Settemari Club

-ABRA – a volunteer association that shopkeepers participate in to donate food and other essentials to the poor

-Does often frequent bars to meet up with friends and such

-Has 2 kids, ages 11 and 13, lives with them and his wife

- Stated that luckily, he does not need to use the healthcare system much
 - Does work well if you have patience
 - Likes the system overall, has a small operation recently and everything went smoothly
- Not thinking of retirement yet

End Time: 10:47am

Interview Transcript

Interviewee: Signora Rinaldi

Date: 11/18/2008

Location: Rinaldi Residence

Start Time: 11:00am

Age: 71, Born in 1937

She was born in Venice, and has lived here all her life. She was born in 1937. She likes the tranquility, the way you can interact with people you see. When walking you encounter people you know. Venice is greatly affected by the ocean. When living on the mainland with cars you feel more oppressed. There are too many tourists which is good for money but not for walking. She is planning on taking a computer class at the University of the Third Age, which is near her house. She took a class in English and the history of Venice. There were quite a few elderly students. She expects the computer class to be difficult. She heard of the university by seeing a poster in the boat stop. She took the classes because she was interested in the history of Venice and she wanted to meet other people her age. She went on a group trip with friends she met in class. The Cassa Peota is made up of 15 friends on San Elena. Every week she and a friend collect the dues, 10 to 20 euro per person, about 2000 euro by the end of the year. They use the money for Christmas gifts; they also go to dinners together and sometimes excursions.

At the end everyone collects whatever they put in, it's like a private bank. If you don't pay for one week, you have to pay for the missed week and 1 extra euro. If you loan money and don't return it, you pay a late fee and the late fee is divide equally between everyone at the end. If you need money you can take some out and then pay back what you took per week.

There is a card for elderly that gives free transportation on the vaporetto after 75, and you can get discounted train and bus fares and cinema and theatre events. In San Elena it's easy for old people to get out without help, there aren't many bridges on San Elena and you can go in the park with trees and walk around.

Badante live in the house with the person they're helping, they eat, sleep with them about 6 days per week. They have one day off, her housekeeper is a badante for another woman and she

cleans her house on her days off. They make about 800-1200 euro per month, it depends on how much help the sick person needs. If they can walk and eat on their own it doesn't cost as much. On their day off, the family usually takes care of the sick person. The commune will help to pay the remainder of what the person can't afford for a badante. The nursing homes cost about 3000 euro per month. Many badanti are from Romania, Croatia, Moldavia, Eastern Europe, the poor countries. Her daily activities involve cleaning the house, preparing stuff for lunch for her grandchildren while her husband picks them up and her daughter works so she can't do it. Sometimes she goes to the bookstore or goes out for a coffee. She and her friends like to read. Venice is easy because she can go out to get something and she finds people to interact with. Even though there is debate about it, she thinks the healthcare system works really well in Italy; it is cheaper than many other countries. They have a family doctor, you go and take a number and he goes through one by one. He will make house calls if necessary, and this is all free. There are pediatric doctors for children zero to fifteen, this is free too. The hospital is free too, procedures and surgeries, whatever is necessary. Fabio's MRI only cost 37 Euro. If you are over 65, you don't have to pay the ticket price. The American professor had heart surgery and it was free for him too.

Taxes are high but it is ok with her because it covers health care. It's expensive to live here, not because of the tourists, but because they can grow their own fruits and vegetables but everything else must be imported on trucks and boats etc. Everything is taxed; even electric bill will have a 30 euro tax on 70 euro bill.

She has stayed for a few months in America and in England; they go to the mountains in the winter, she likes to learn about different foods and opinions – but she wouldn't want to live anywhere besides Venice. In her generation they are close to their city, she'd only move for 5/6 months but she'd always move back. Even Fabio moved away but he still likes the life in Venice.

End Time: 12:30pm

Interview Transcript

Date: 11/14/08

Location: Settemari Club

Start Time: 11:28am

Interviewee: Umberto Angelin

Born in: 1937

He has been retired for 10 years; he worked doing many different things – worked for the municipality and in a travel agency. He was born in Venice. He likes everything about Venice, but doesn't like the past 30 years of administration. Politics have gone downhill; he doesn't like what they wanted to do to Venice. 30 to 40 years ago Venice was a city with industries and artisans, banks and factories. Now that has disappeared because of politics – all that's left is tourism. This is a big problem for Venetians because many apartments have turned into hotels and bed and breakfasts. There aren't enough places for Venetians to stay. The population has decreased from 150,000 to 55,000. He thinks Venice is a museum now; the city is "finished". According to him, Venice has to "die" to be re-born. We can never forget Venice's history because history is immortal, but everything has an end. "What goes up must come down" like a bell curve. He almost hopes that Venice stays like a big museum so that it is preserved, but after a while there won't be any more Venetians, it will just be visitors to the "museum". He lives with his wife, his children are married and live elsewhere in Venice. He lives in the Lido now, houses are very expensive on the island, and it's cheaper for him in Lido. The problem with housing is that tourists will pay the same price to stay for a day that residents will pay for a months rent. Tourists will pay 600 euro for a day versus 600 euro for a month.

The Settimari club takes up most of his time, it is a good association not only for rowing, but for culture. It encourages them to carry on the traditions of Venetian culture. He pays dues to other organizations but he isn't as involved with them as Settimari. He said it is typical of Venetians to hang out a bar with friends, "life is in the streets". Venetians don't make appointments to hang out like the U.S. does; you just go out after work and find people to hang out with. Bars are all the same, just simple. For himself, he'd go anywhere he could find somewhere to sit, find a

friend to talk to, or make a new friend if he didn't see anyone he know – most people he would recognize at least anyways. He thinks it is a pity that Venice is shrinking because the “vultures” (Those buying up land to be converted into bed and breakfasts) are taking housing and using it as hotels. He said there used to be clubs like the Settimari in every quarter, a place where you can drink, eat, and hangout – now there are too many tourists at bars.

Healthcare in Venice is really good and the doctors are good. One of the American professors went to the hospital and had a stint put in his heart in Italy and the American doctors were impressed.

He thinks the badante are good, they are really attentive and mostly from Eastern Europe. His mother had a badante, but now there are too many. The women are smart, smarter than me because they work 3-5 years, save their money, and then go back and stay in their own country. The men from Africa don't work, and then stay in Venice. The men who sell bags are ok, but it's the ones who sell drugs or are involved with prostitutes are bad. He thinks drugs are a big problem and you can't do anything about it thanks to Americans. 80% of drugs come from Afghanistan, Columbia, and Venezuela – but Americans don't bomb where their drugs come from.

He thinks Venice is safe, but not Mestre. There is stealing, drugs, and killing in some parts, but this is controlled in Venice. He thinks its easy to get around, he has no mobility problems and he thinks walking is good for you.

His mother's badante was Polish, she was one of the first badante. They are always in campi with older people, and there are too many now. All the children must work to live so they can't take care of the parents anymore.

His daughter has 2 kids who go to school from 8-5 in Murano, his daughter is a teacher and he used to pick them up and bring them home when his daughter was working.

Older people want someone to be there for them, but the children can't do it anymore. Families used to live all together, but that has changed now. He found a badante through an agency for his

mother, you can sometimes get them through churches no. Its difficult to maintain the badante – it was easier for his mother because they used to just pay the badante, now you must pay fees to have the badante too – to pay for health and pension – like benefits.

Quotes:

-“This is a big problem for the Venetian people.” (referring to the industries that have left Venice)

-“This place [the Settemari Club] was a bar and on the first, second, and third floors above there were families. Now, there is a hotel, a bed and breakfast.”

-“We don’t have any people left. We had 150000 a few years ago and now we only have 50000.”

-“It’s a museum.”

-“It has to die to be reborn.”

- “Nothing is eternal, everything has an end.”

-“Now we can only hope that Venice stays a big museum.” Referring to the preservation of the city itself

-“This building was built for 12 families and it used to be full. Now there are only seven people living here.” (referring to his home)

-“We are the last Venetians. After us, there will be no more.”

-Particularly likes the Settemari Club because “It is not just about rowing, but culture as well.”

-“Life in Venice was in the streets; after work you would walk the streets and find all your friends in bars, it was not like it is in the United States where you have to call a friend a month ahead of time to meet up with him.”

-“Anywhere there is a place to sit; I will find a friend to talk to, even if I have never seen him before.”

-“That is why it is a pity Venice is shrinking; vultures come in and buy up the land for bed and breakfasts.”

-“Now you go into a bar, have a drink and that’s it. There are too many tourists.”

-“It is very easy; you just need to be used to it.”(referring to mobility)

-“It is a difficult time right now for Italy.”

End Time: 12:20pm

Interview Transcript

Interviewee: Signor Rinaldi

Date: 11/13/2008

Location: Pampo's Restaurant

Start Time: 7:00pm

Age: 74, Born in 1934

He was born in Venice in 1934, retired now but used to own a hardware shop and always lived in Venice. Venice is very interesting, life in a little town is very important, life is about meeting friends around food. It's a simple life with no cars and no buses – there is big architecture and theater but it's a simple life with friends. At 70 years old you get a discount for the bus and train, and an i.d. card that's free after 70. There are only tourists here, Venice lost all the shops and little jobs. Now there are only stores for tourists, hotels, and glass. The artistry and handiwork has all been lost due to tourists. There are 20,000-30,000 tourists a day, but only 60,000 residents. The part where he lives is quiet, there are no tourists. He lives with family and wife, Fabio in America, etc. During the day he goes to kindergarten with one nephew then meets the other nephew. In the morning he spends times on little jobs, in the summer they travel to Lido to go to the beach with nephews.

Mobility: in other cities its different, he wants to walk, he's used to walking, walking is a habit. It's a problem for others only because we're not used to it. He said he might move to the U.S. after his wife dies (as a joke).

Venice is the only place he's lived, his mother was Venetian, his grandmother was Venetian.

It's not safe to have a private house because of banditi; it's safer to be in areas with a lot of houses/apartments. 40% of foreigners are from the east. The badante are good, they have a lot of patience. They eat sleep and live for free and are paid 800-1000 euro per month and they usually send it home to family. There is a hospital for old people. Venice is quiet and tranquil. The

badante fill a psychological need for elders, allowing them to stay in their own home without having to go to a nursing home or hospital. Badante are cheaper than the nursing home, which is about 1300 euro per month including expenses for police, doctors, and nurses. Not many want to have those jobs anymore so the badante help fill that gap by taking care of people instead of going to nursing homes.

End Time: 7:30pm